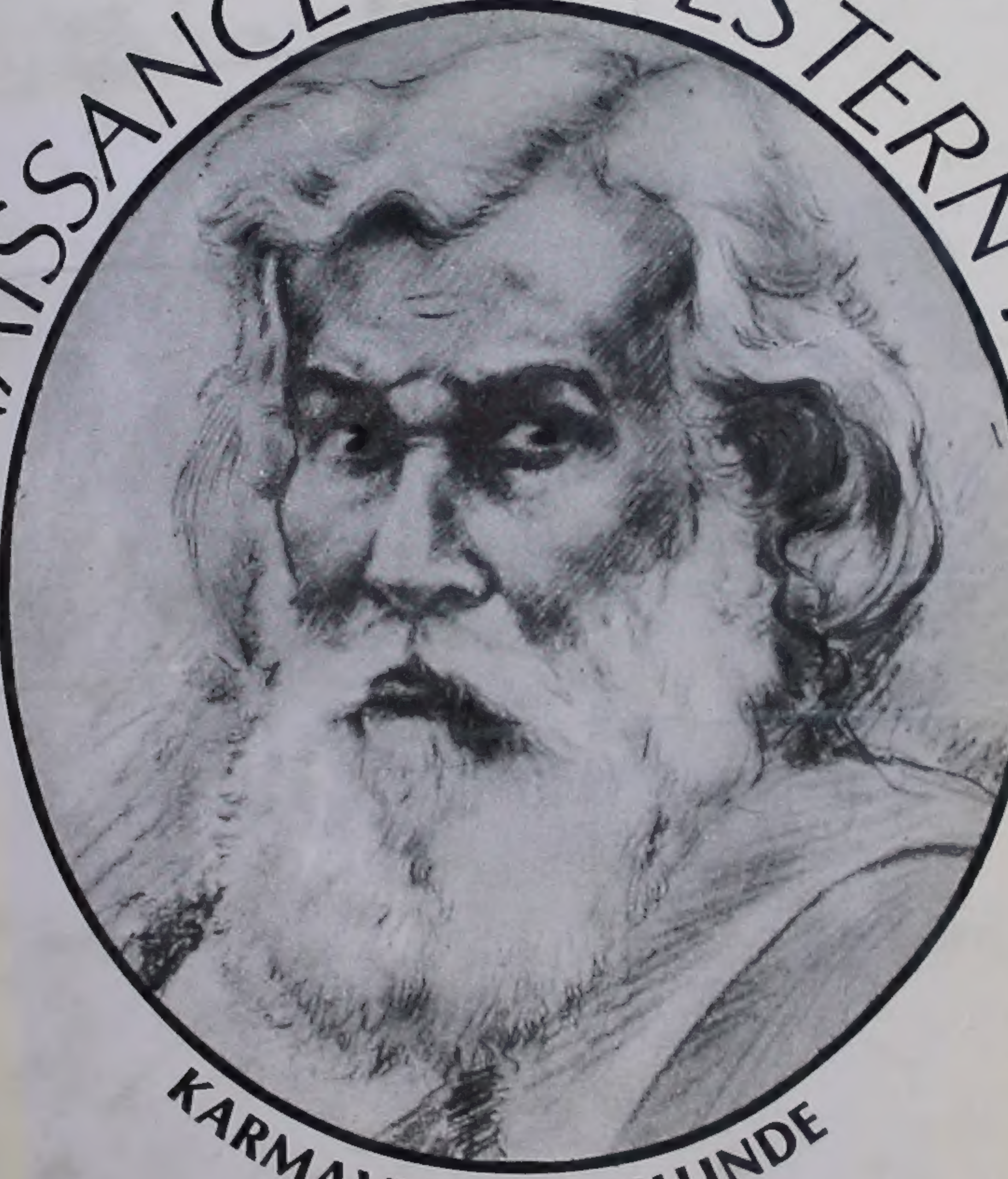
RENAISSANCE IN WESTERN INDIA



KARMAVEER V.R. SHINDE
(1873-1944)

Shivaprabha Ghugare

Himalaya Publishing House

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Karmaveer V. R. Shinde
(1873 - 1944)

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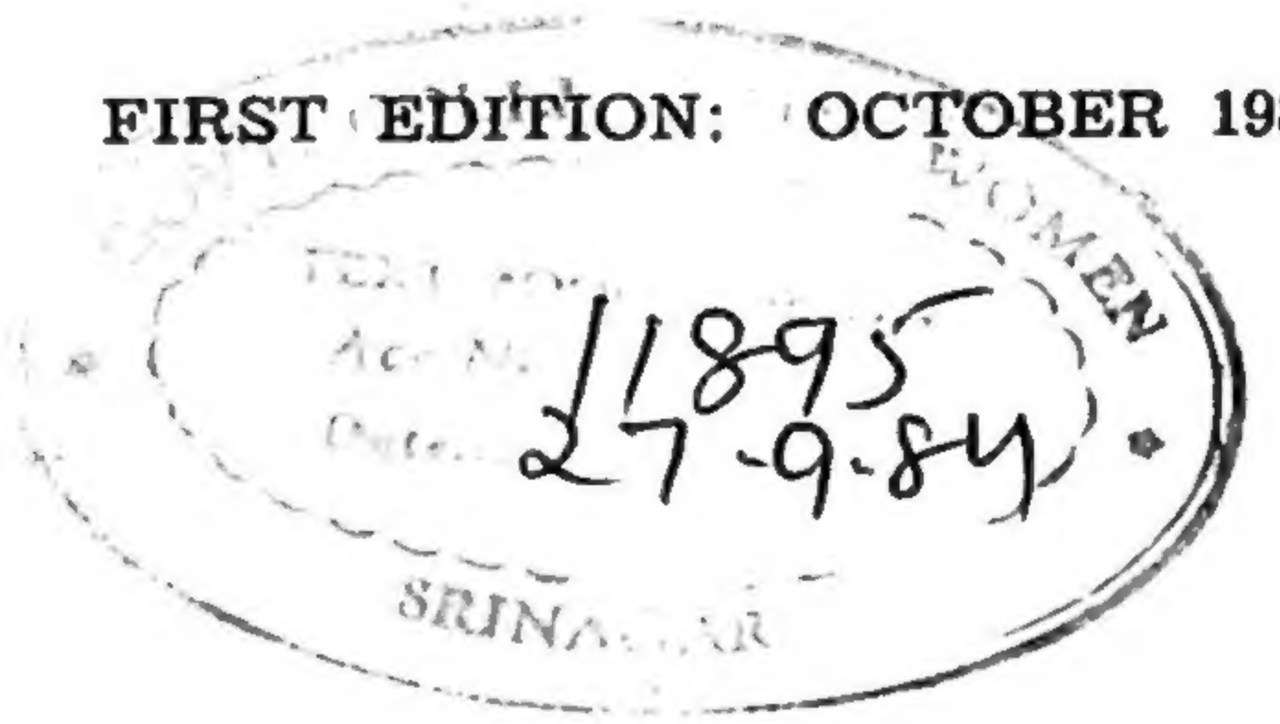

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TO THE SACRED MEMORY OF
MY GURUS

BABURAO JIVAJI GHUGARE,
my father-in-law,

DR. CHIDAMBAR M. KULKARNI,
my guide.

PREFACE

This book **Renaissance in Western India: Karmaveer V. R. Shinde (1873-1944)** contains the substance of a thesis successfully presented by me on 19 May, 1977 to the University of Bombay for the Degree of Doctor of Philoscphy (Arts) in History. My father-in-law, Late Shree Baburao Jivaji Ghugare of Kolhapur, inspired me to study the Renaissance in Modern Maharashtra, while my guide Late Dr. Chidambar M. Kulkarni, ex-Reader in History Department of Bombay University, constantly encouraged me and guided me to steer myself through the complexities of relevant material to produce this book. It is a matter of regret to me that I could not publish this book in their life-time and now console myself by making a posthumous dedication to them.

The subject of my study being difficult and at times quite exacting one, it could be completed only with the help and goodwill of my numerous well-wishers and friends. It is impossible to thank them individually. I express my deep sense of gratitude to all those who encouraged me in this endeavour. Special mention may be made of librarians and staff of the libraries of the University of Bombay, Ramnarain Ruia College, Asiatic Society, Itihas Sanshodhak Mandal and Marathi Granth Sangrahalaya of Bombay, the Central Library, Poona, and Shree Shripatrao Shinde Library, Kolhapur. The Director and Staff of Government Archives, Bombay, the presidents and secretaries of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India in Poona and Bombay, Karmaveer Shinde Centenary Committee of Maharashtra Government, the President of Prarthana Samaj, Bombay, and the Principal of Ramnarain Ruia College need be mentioned with great gratitude for their co-operation and

help. My sincere thanks are to Vijayrao Madhavrao Shinde for allowing me to use the files of **'Vijayi Maratha'**, Madhavrao Mukundrao Patil for the files of **'Din Mitra'**, Padmashree Balasaheb Patil for the files of 'Satyavadi' and G. L. Chandavarkar for the files of 'Subodha Patrika'. I am also thankful to Vitthalrao Satav, the President of Shivaji Maratha Shikshan Sanstha, Pune, for allowing me to make use of the personal library of Karmaveer Shinde which is preserved in Shivaji Maratha Shikshan Sanstha. Dr. G. M. Pawar gave me opportunity to use the then unpublished diaries of Karmaveer Shinde while Sadashivrao Kajrolkar, the secretary of D. C. Mission Bombay, made the Minute-books of the D. C. Mission Society of India in Bombay, available to me. Laxmibai Prataprao Shinde granted me permission to include a rare article by V. R. Shinde in my book. I am indebted to them all for the same.

In the course of my research, I met many men and women of eminence who were closely associated with Karmaveer Shinde in his varied activities. They were ex-Director of Education V. D. Ghate, Guruvarya Baburao Jagtap, Anandibai Shirke, Jedhe brothers, Jayavantibai Jayavantrao Jagtap, Ganpatrao Bapusaheb Shinde, Ahilyabai Ganpatrao Shinde, P. N. Rajbhoj and M. K. Madhale from Poona; Barrister Ramrao Deshmukh from Amraoti, Laxman Shastri Joshi and R. N. Chavan from Wai, Bhai Dr. Madhavrao Bagal and G. G. Jadhav from Kolhapur, Narayanrao Kajrolkar, N. R. Phatak, Kamalabai More, Justice R. R. Bhole and Principal P. T. Borale from Bombay. My discussions with them and their eye-witness account of the activities of Karmaveer Shinde greatly enlightened me about the various activities conducted by Shinde. I am particularly thankful to members of Karmaveer Shinde's family—Smt. Laxmibai Prataprao Shinde, Sushilabai Ravindra Shinde, Shubhatai Eknathrao Ghorpade, Guruvarya Eknathrao Ghorpade, Dr. G. M. Pawar and Sujata Pawar who gave me valuable information relevant to my research. Dr. Dhananjaya Keer, Dr. M. P. Mangudkar, Dr. A. G. Pawar, Dr. A. R. Kulkarni, Dr. G. H. Khare, Dr. Mukundrao Agaskar, Vishwanathrao

Wable and Prof. P. V. Shelar gave me valuable suggestions. I am very much indebted to them all for the information they have provided and the suggestions they have made.

While my thesis was in the manuscript stage, a portion of chapter III was published under the title 'Liberal Religion in India' in the book **Dharma Jeevan Va Tatwajnan—Maharshi Vitthal Ramji Shinde**, edited by Dr. M. P. Mangudkar, (published by Social Welfare Department, Government of Maharashtra, 1979). Unfortunately, my authorship of the said article was not mentioned in the book. For this, the editor Dr. M. P. Mangudkar has expressed his regrets under his letter dated 8-7-1983 to the author and has informed that the correction of inserting the author's name would be made by reference to Government.

The University Grants Commission made this work a possibility by awarding me the generous grant of Teacher-fellowship for the research scheme. The Indian Council of Historical Research by its liberal publication-grant facilitated the publication of this book. Dr. P. M. Joshi, Dr. V. G. Dighe, Barrister P. G. Patil, Dr. S. D. Karnik and Prof. Shrikumar read the manuscript and strongly recommended its publication. My husband Arvind Ghugare and my brother Shivajirao Patil shared the arduous task of prcof-reading. For the photographs in the book, I am indebted to M. D. Shewale, Secretary of the D. C. Mission Society, Poona, Smt. Sushilabai Ravindra Shinde, Bhai Dr. Madhavrao Bagal, Shivaji Smarak Mandir Ltd., Bombay, R. N. Chavan and Brahmo Samaj, Wai. I sincerely acknowledge my deep debt of gratitude to all the authors, publishers and editors from whose books, journals and other publications I have drawn excerpts.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Shri V. R. Shinde lived and worked in an age in which thrived great leaders such as M. G. Ranade, Dr. Bhandarkar, Sir N. G. Chandavarkar, Lokamanya Tilak, G. K. Gokhale, Dr. Ambedkar, Gandhiji, Shri Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Shree Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda, Annie Besant, Pandit Malaviya, R. P. Paranjpe, to mention only a few.

All these great persons contributed to the awakening of our people in one way or the other. V. R. Shinde has left a mark of his own on the Renaissance Movement in Western India. Yet his contribution is not widely known. That is so, because the period was full of great events, such as national movements, constitutional reforms, terrorist activities and such others. Naturally, the religio-social work to which V. R. Shinde dedicated his life has not received the same attention as other events has received. In a comprehensive history of Modern Maharashtra, the achievements of social reformers like V. R. Shinde must find a place. Otherwise there would be a serious lacuna. An humble attempt is made in the pages that follow, to give a critical appreciation of V. R. Shinde's contribution to Renaissance in Western India.

While our attention is concentrated on Shinde, references have been always made to the views and activities of other leaders as well as to those historical situations in which were placed all these reformers.

Renaissance in India has been largely a response to the challenge of western civilisation which came mainly through the British rule in India. This challenge was

more or less comprehensive — political, economic, social, religious and cultural. Indian response, therefore, was also comprehensive. The political challenge was met by the national movement. The economic exploitation was answered by the Swadeshi Movement. The social and religious challenge was responded with socio-religious reforms. The cultural renaissance took the form of national education, an upsurge of regional literatures, new art, and an unprecedented enthusiasm displayed in rejecting certain forms of western culture.

It is also pertinent to note that the Indian response to western culture or the Renaissance movement was of three types. One was that of total rejection of western culture. The second one was blind imitation of all that was western. The third one was of retaining our culture in a reformed form and accepting all that was good in the western culture. Most of the renowned reformers of India, particularly of Maharashtra including V. R. Shinde, belong to the third group which tried to harmonise our traditional culture with modern western culture.

As the theme of this thesis is so complicated, it has become necessary to adopt a historical and analytical approach. The writings of V. R. Shinde are the primary sources, which have been examined critically with the help of other contemporary sources and the historical method of inquiry.

The period in which V. R. Shinde lived and worked was not in the remote past. Indeed, we can say that the period is a part of the contemporary period. Fortunately for us, there are several scholars and leaders who knew V. R. Shinde personally. I met some such elderly persons and obtained valuable information. However, not all the information could be utilised in this work.

It must be admitted that my attempt has been to throw new light on the activities and achievements of V. R. Shinde. A good deal of new material has been discovered during the course of my research; and it has been utilised to throw fresh light on the life and activities

of V. R. Shinde. Indeed, this has helped us to arrive at a new interpretation of not only Shinde's work but of the entire Renaissance movement as such. The comparative study of the activities and opinions of Shinde's comtemporaries has been, however, extremely limited.

I offer this humble work to the world of scholarship for their scrutiny and comment.

Chapter II

V. R. SHINDE — A BRIEF LIFE-SKETCH*

Karmaveer Vitthal Ramji alias Annasaheb Shinde was born on 23 April, 1873 at Jamkhindi, the capital of a small princely state of the same name. At that time. Appasaheb Patwardhan was the ruler. The family of Shinde has settled in Jamkhindi at the time of Vitthalrao's grand-father, Basavantrao, who was known as Subhedar Basavantrao, who had lost his father Chandrojirao[1] in a battle, came to Jamkhindi as an orphan. With the encouragement of one Desai, a Lingayat by faith, and Appasaheb Daftardar probably a Brahman landlord, Basavantrao took to agriculture and accumulated a good fortune in the form of landed property and a palacial house.

Marathi-speaking Basavantrao from Maharashtra was married to Shantabai, a Kannada speaking girl from Karnataka. She was a hardworking woman who looked after the upkeep of the land and of the house. She was a devotee of Yellamma. Vitthalrao's father, Ramjibaba came under the influence of a Brahman teacher and received education upto Vernacular Final. It was a rare

---

*This account of the life of V. R. Shinde is based mainly on:

(i) Karmaveer Vitthal Ramji Shinde: **Mazya Athavani Va Anubhava,** Parts 1, 2, 3 (Part 1 and 2 republished and Part 3 published for the first time, (Published by Shree Lekhan Vachan Bhandar, Laxmi Road, Poona 2, 1958).

(ii) B. B. Keskar, (Ed.): **Vitthal Ramji Shinde Yanche Lekha, Vyakhyane ani Upadesha,** (Published by Damodar Savlaram Ani Mandali, Bombay, 1912).

(iii) Krishnarao Bhaurao Babar: **Karmaveer Vidyarthi,** First edition, (1930).

References when necessary to other sources are cited.

achievement for a Maratha at that time. Ramjibaba worked as a teacher for some time; Afterwards he worked in an office of administration of Jamkhindi as an efficient clerk in charge of stores and afterwards stables. Ramjibaba, a follower of Varkari sect, was married to Kannada speaking Yamunabai, who was brought up under the influence of Vaishnavite Brahman family of the Kulkarni of Algur, a small village, 6 miles to the east of Jamkhindi. Thus, the family was exposed for at least three generations to different religious and linguistic influences. Naturally, Vitthalrao came to inherit a deep respect for all religions and cultures.

Ramjibaba, though an accounts-clerk, could not control the economy of his own house due to his charity, generosity, hospitality, and keenness to maintain the prestige of the family. He had such sense of honour and self-respect that he resigned his post three times due to trouble in the office before he finally left the job in 1878, and remained unemployed for 16 years. Consequently, due to lack of current income, and Ramjibaba's lending money to his friends, who often never returned the money and his incurring loans for festivals and the marriage ceremonies of children, the family lost its landed property and mortgaged the house which also was eventually lost. Marriages of Vitthalrao, of Vitthalrao's elder brother, Parashuram and of his sister, Janakka, were performed in 1882. At the time of his marriage, Vitthalrao was 9 years of age and his wife Rukminibai was 6 months old. In spite of poverty, Ramjibaba and Yamunabai showed persistent interest in educating their sons and daughters.

Ramjibaba had in all 6 children — three sons and three daughters — Parashuram, Vithal, Janakka, Tanyakka, Eknath and Chandrakka. Parashuram, the eldest son, died at the age of 18 years. Janakka was a very brilliant girl educated upto the 4th standard before she was sent to her husband's house. Tanyakka was very weak since childhood, but along with Janakka, she continued to help Vitthalrao in his Mission, and died in 1920. Chandrakka died of tuberculosis in 1906. Eknath outlived all the

brothers and sisters and he retired as an official of the Bombay Municipal Corporation. Yamunabai brought up her children with tender care, affection and interest, entertained them with devotional songs and stories and memories of her parents and in-laws. Kind at heart, sincere in her affection and tolerant to others, Yamunabai extended her kindness to the friends of her children and other visitors without any discrimination between Brahmans, Lingayats, Muslims and untouchables. The worship of various deities in the house, the tolerance shown to the religious ideas of others, and recognition of importance of education impressed Vitthalrao a great deal. He was thus unconsciously trained for the career of a social and religious reformer.

Vitthalrao's educational career was promising, but it was beset with a number of difficulties. After completing his primary education, Vitthalrao joined Parashurambhau Patwardhan High School at Jamkhindi in 1885. In this year, Vitthalrao lost his elder brother, Parashuram, who died of cholera. As a result, Vitthalrao though a child of twelve, became aware of his responsibility towards the family, and he became more considerate towards his parents, brothers and sisters. He won merit-scholarship of Rs. 1½ per month in the 6th standard which was gradually raised to Rs. 3 in the Matriculation class. This scholarship was a great boom to the poverty-stricken Shinde family. During his high school career Shinde developed keen interest in English literature, civilization and culture. He had equally great interest in Sanskrit literature and he studied **Shakuntalam, Kadambari. Harsha-charita, Raghuvamsha** for his Sanskrit classes. His study of Marathi literature particularly that of the saints as Tukaram, Jnaneshvar, Ekanath, Mahipati and Sridhar was quite intensive. Like his father, he was able to read the puranas and explain the meaning, and also perform **kirtanas.** He conducted a debating union and delivered speeches on the need for social reform as was the practice in those days. Over and above this literary education what Vitthalrao imbibed the most from his

school career in Jamkhindi was the spirit of liberalism that transcended the limits of narrow casteism and mutual hatred. In his memoirs Vitthalrao described how with great pleasure and interest his Brahman teacher Ganesha Shastri Joshi explained to Vitthalrao and his friends the niceties of the language and style of the authors of **Raghuvansham, Shakuntalam, Kadambari** and **Harsha-Charitam** and as to how his English teacher Mr. Vasudevrao Chirmule also a Brahman, impressed him by his lovable character. His friends coming from different castes — Muslims, Lingayats, Marathas, Brahmans were treated without any religious or social differentiation by their mothers and how they enjoyed eating in one another's houses. This spirit of liberalism became an essential element of the character and personality of Vitthalrao in his future career and distinguished him from other leaders of that age.

In 1891, Vitthalrao passed his Matriculation with flying colours at the age of 18. Vitthalrao was taken up as a teacher in the same High School. By this time, his father also was called back to service. Appasaheb Patwardhan, the ruler of Jamakhindi, offered to bear all the expenses for the higher education of Vitthalrao if he was ready to join the Veterinary Science course. But Vitthalrao was interested in the humanities and the social sciences and therefore declined the offer. This displeased Appasaheb Patwardhan to such an extent that Vitthalrao was dismissed from his service in the High School.

Vitthalrao left Jamakhindi and came to Poona in 1893 with a slender hope that he would get a scholarship from the Deccan Maratha Education Association for his college education. Shri Gangaram Mhaske, who was the Chairman of this Association, granted him a scholarship of Rs. 10 per month, and Vitthalrao joined Furgusson College in 1893. The small scholarship of Rs. 10 was too meagre to pay the tuition fees, and to meet expenses of books and food. Principal G. K. Agarkar refused to give poor Vitthalrao freeship as he was receiving scholarship from, Deccan Maratha Education Association. With great diffi-

culty, Shinde collected the amount for examination fees by begging from door to door, and at last got a very pleasant surprise when the wife of his friend, Vishnupant Terdalkar, offered him Rs. 20 which she had received from her brother as the gift on **Bhau-bij** day (brother's day). As a result of these hard conditions of life Vitthalrao passed the F.Y. Arts examination in 1894 with very low percentage of marks. In the Intermediate Arts Class his mind was open to the influence of new ideas of the liberals like John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer, which he studied with zeal and understanding. By this time, Vitthalrao's father Ramjibaba was removed from the job by Appasaheb Patwardhan and Vitthalrao was required to support his parents at Jamakhindi by taking up tuitions. Consequently Vitthalrao failed in Intermediate Arts examination in the first attempt and passed it in the second attempt by the end of 1895. The year 1895-96 brought new challenges and new aspirations as well. His sister, Janakka, was suffering great misery at the hands of her husband and in-laws. Vitthalrao brought her back and took her to Poona for her education. But his enthusiasm for women's education was throttled by the communal atmosphere in Poona. Maharashi Karve refused to admit Janakka in his Boarding School for forsaken wives and widows, as she was not a Brahman, while Pandita Ramabai, a missionary had plans for converting women to Christianity. At last Janakka was admitted in Hujur Paga High School and receivtd help from Miss Mary Bhor and a scholarship of Rs. 10 from the Maratha ruler of Mudhol.

In December, 1895, Shinde came under the influence of the national movement when he got an opportunity to work as a volunteer for the Congress session held in Poona, and heard the presidential speech of Surendranath Banerjee. However, a more important influence that worked on Shinde in the same session was his hearing the speech of Rev. Dr. Sunderland, the renowned missionary of the British and American Unitarian Association. Shinde met Dr. Sunderland personally and after some discussion

on the Unitarian Mission, received the book, **Larger Meaning of Unitarianism** from him. From 1896, fortune started smiling on Vitthalrao and he was much relieved from his economic embarrassments as he got a scholarship of Rs. 25 per month from Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda on the express condition that Vitthalrao would serve in Baroda state after the completion of his education. The outbreak of plague in Poona, and the Hindu Muslim riots gave a setback to Vitthalrao in his B.A. examination which he passed at his second attempt by the end of 1898 securing first class marks in History and Politics This success gave him admission straight to the 2nd LL.B. class. In 1898, Shinde read the writings of Max Muller, the great Indologist. At the same time, Vitthalrao happened to come in contact with Kalaskar, a notable social worker from Baramati, and accompanied him to the **Upasana** of the Prarthana Samaj at Poona on 29 May, 1898. Vitthalrao's interest in the religion was revived when he heard the **Upasana** by Kashinath Balvant Marathe and developed contact with G. B. Kotkar, M. G. Ranade and R. G. Bhandarkar. Shinde's plan for his future career was to be a lawyer and to take interest in social reform. He joined the Law College at Bombay in 1899. After his LL.B., he was to get a good job in the Baroda state and his parents were happy that they were now at the end of their long journey of poverty and misery. But Providence had other plans for Vitthalrao's future career.

Moti Bulasa, a member of Prarthana Samaj, was sent on a Unitarian Mission Scholarship to England but he died on his way on 16 September, 1900.[2] The Parathana Samaj, the sponsoring body, was very much in need of another worthy candidate for the purpose. Moved by the speeches as also by the distress of the leading members of the Prarthana Samaj, Shinde offered himself as a candidate.[3] When his parents heard of this decision of their son, they were overtaken by grief and disappointment for some time. However, Vitthalrao's mother took up courage, consoled Ramjibaba, and both prepared themselves to shower blessings on their son who was setting

sail on the mission of Liberal Religion. Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda was approached by Shinde to get help from him in meeting the expenses of journey to and fro to England and Sayajirao made arrangements for it immediately. Before leaving India for England, Vitthalrao met Lokamanya Tilak for the first time in his life to receive his blessings and guidance. Tilak gave him affectionate treatment and showed interest in his plans of missionary career.[4] Vitthalrao closed the chapter of possibility of his career as a lawyer for ever, and with it the possibility of a life of prosperity and prestige and decided to live in poverty as a Missionary struggling for the welfare of others.

Vitthalrao joined the Manchester College of Theology by the end of the year 1901. He studied 'comparative religion' and prepared himself for missionary work of Liberal Religion. He observed the condition of the lower classes in England and Europe, and also noted as to how the various Missions like Domestic Mission, Southplace Moral Association, Postal Mission were extending help to them. As a result of this training in Liberal Religion, Vitthalrao aspired to bring different religions in the world closer on the basis of understanding each other and he continued to be possessed by his idea to the end of his life. Along with the understanding of the concept of Liberal Religion, Vitthalrao started developing a vision for social reform, and an insight into the problems of different traits of social life. The best example of this new insight was his paper "Romance of Social Reform in India" which he presented to a gathering of Martino Club of the Manchester College. He also foresaw conflict between new education and orthodox traditions in Indian family in his paper. On completion of his study in Manchester College, Vitthalrao attended 'The International Liberal Religious Conference' held at Amsterdam from 1 to 3 September, 1903, and presented his paper "Liberal Religious Movement in India" to the Conference. Vitthalrao's stay in England was not without financial difficulties as he was receiving a small scholarship of only £ 100 per year

from the Unitarian Association. He worked as a preacher in his free time and compensated for the shortage of funds.[5] From England Vitthalrao sent letters and essays for publishing them in **Subodh Patrika.** They were very much admired in the literary circles.[6] Vitthalrao's sincerity, his hard work, his painstaking nature, his insight into different problems all impressed his mates from different Eurasian countries so much that one of them wrote a couplet on Vitthalrao:

A meek and modest Indian
who will, unless he faints
Someday duly be worshipped
Among his country's saints.

How prophetic were these ccuplets!

I

Shinde came back to India on 6th October, 1903. On his arrival, Bombay Prarthana Samaj gave a hearty welcome to him, and appointed him the Missionary of Prarthana Samaj in the Bombay Province. Vitthalrao took keen interest in his work and won the admiration of all the veterans of the Samaj. He was deputed by the Prarthana Samaj to attend the All India Theistic Conference that was held along with the Conference of Indian National Congress in Madras, in December, 1903. Shinde found the All India Theistic Conference in a moribund condition. With the view of reviving it, Shinde took up the responsibility of its secretaryship. For this purpose Shinde attended the **Mahotsava** of Brahmo Samaj in January, 1904 at Calcutta and also undertook extensive tours to get an insight into the condition of religion and religious institutions in different parts of the country. Shinde decided to revive the activity of Liberal religion in India by revitalising it with proper organisation. Between 1904-1905, Shinde gave evidence of his ability of organisation by organising the work of Prarthana Samaj on new lines and secured the co-operation of its members in successfully

olding the All India Theistic Conference at Poona in December, 1904. As a result of this, Shinde was asked to be the permanent General Secretary of the All India Theistic Conference. Shinde's activities went on multiplying in various directions. In his missionary work, Shinde came in close contact with the untouchables. Noticing their aspirations and efforts, Shinde established 'The Depressed Classes Mission Society of India' in 1906.[7]

In addition to his heavy duties as a Missionary of Prarthana Samaj, Shinde worked hard for the All India Theistic Conference and the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India. From 1906 to 1910, the Depressed Classes Mission spread its activities for the welfare of students, women and men of the Depressed Classes by way of schools, boardings, dispensaries and **Bhajan Samajas.** It co-ordinated the efforts made by various other institutions under its auspices. In 1908, when the Poona branch of Depressed Classes Mission was established, the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke was approached for help. Sir George Clarke allowed his daughter, Miss Clarke to present a Music programme in aid of the Depressed Classes Mission. The programme attracted the attention of European officers, Indian rulers and Indian leaders to the activities of the Mission. In addition to the work for Depressed Classes, Shinde gave co-operation to the work of Satyashodhak Samaj as well.[8]

However, Shinde's involvement in the activities outside Prarthana Samaj was not much appreciated by some workers of Prarthana Samaj. To avoid embarrassment, Shinde resigned the post of the Missionary of Prarthana Samaj in 1910.[9] However, some sincere workers such as D. G. Vaidya, who appreciated his work, continued to help him by collecting. Rs. 60 per month from among themselves. Shinde continued to extend co-operation to the Prarthana Samaj even after his resignation.

By the beginning of 1911, the Depressed Classes Mission suffered financial stringency. Shinde utilised this difficulty to win sympathy of the people from various quarters and in various ways to establish channels of

communication between the Depressed Classes and the masses through rice-fund, rupee fund, clothes-fund etc. In 1912, Shinde held the Maharashtra Conference of the Mission at Poona, and involved learned men from various social stratas to express their opinion on the abolition of untouchability and education of the Depressed classes. The Conference secured a big donation of Rs. 20,000 from Holkar Maharaja of Indore, towards the Building fund of the Poona Branch. The Poona Municipality gave seven acres of land for the building of the Mission.

In the same year (1911-12), Shinde's efforts to organise the All India Theistic Conference on a sound basis bore fruit and the Conference accepted the Constitution. The Conference also entertained Shinde's desire for holding the Conference of 'International Council of Liberal Religions' in India. It was decided that the Conference should be held in 1914. With a view to helping the Conference, **'The Theistic Directory'** edited by Shinde was published in 1912. It gave information about Liberal Religious movements in India, Japan, Persia, Europe and America.

In 1913, Shinde's efforts to attract the help of the government towards the Depressed Classes bore fruit. Lord Willingdon agreed to introduce change in the policy of the government towards the Depressed Classes, and sanctioned a grant to the extent of 50 per cent of the total expenses of the schools, a special grant to boardings and Rs. 20,000 for the building construction of Ahalya-shram at Poona. Shinde's concern for the untouchables was also extended to the care of the Mangs who were stamped as a 'criminal caste'. For relieving them from restrictions and to give them opportunity of agriculture, Lord Willingdon agreed to establish a colony of Mangs.

However, when the World War of 1914 broke out, all these plans of Shinde suffered a setback. Shinde could not hold the Conference of 'International Council of Liberal Religions' in India due to the outbreak of the war. The government's financial policy became so stringent that the construction of Ahalyashram had to be postponed till the

end of the war. The colony of Mangs could not get the land as the land now came to be earmarked for the use of soldiers.

In the period of the First World-War, Shinde gave an impetus to the demand that the untouchables should be recruited in the army again. The movement bore fruit. and the Indian government lifted the ban on recruitment of untouchables on 6 February, 1917.[10]

II

.The rising popularity of Vitthalrao Shinde wrecked on the rock of the political movement of 1917. Shinde, a nationalist, desired that the non-Brahmans and the untouchables should give their support to the "Lucknow Pact", and started holding meetings for winning their support for it. He founded the "Maratha Rashtriya Sangha" on 26 October, 1917 to infuse the spirit of nationalism among Marathas.[11] He held a big meeting in front of Shanvarwada in which the representatives of 18 castes including Lokamanya Tilak as the representative of Brahmans delivered their speeches. However, in spite of Tilak's insistence that the Maratha Rashtriya Sangha should work under the auspices of the National Congress, Shinde kept the organisation independent. For creating national spirit among the untouchables, Shinde founded The All India Untouchability League by the end of 1917. In December, 1917, when the National Congress met at Calcutta under the presidentship of Mrs. Annie Besant, it accepted the resolution of abolishing untouchability. This fructified Shinde's efforts in this direction for the last 10 years. Shinde, flushed with success, held **"Asprishyata Niwarak Parishad"** (the Conference for abolishing untouchability) at Bombay on 23 March, 1918. The meeting was attended by delegates of the eminence of Bipinchandra Pal, Mukundrao Jayakar, C. V. Mehta and Lokamanya Tilak. Though Tilak delivered a spirited speech in favour of abolition of untouchability, he refused to sign the declaration of 'non-observance of untouchability' in personal life.[12] This action of Tilak disappointed Shinde

and embittered the feelings of untouchables against the Nationalists. The rift among the untouchables, and their alliance with Liberals and the non-Brahman party, put Shinde in an embarrassing situation. Shinde was invited to give evidence before the Southborough Committee in January 1919.[13] Similar to the demands made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Shinde also made a demand for separate electorate and 9 reserved seats for the untouchables in Bombay Presidency. However, the Committee gave only one nominated seat to the untouchables in Bombay Presidency.

There arose in this connection a vexed problem as to who should propose the name of the depressed class member for nomination to the Council. One view was that this was to be privilege of the Depressed Classes Association. Another was that this should be better left to the Government. Shinde rejected both these views and made an ingenious proposal: the name of the depressed classes-member should be suggested by the caste Hindu members of the Council with whom the member was to work. Shinde felt that the member from the depressed classes should be acceptable to others, as this alone would ensure proper opportunities to him. But Shinde's far-sighted and subtle suggestion was brushed aside by B. R. Ambedkar and others.[14]

By the end of 1920, elections of the Reformed Legislature were held. Shinde organised a new party — "**Bahujan Samaj Paksha**" — i.e., the party of the masses consisting of economically and socially backward classes of peasants, labourers, craftsmen, small shop-keepers, women and untouchables. By this time, the non-Brahman party had secured 7 reserved seats for 'the Marathas and others'. Shahu Maharaj requested Shinde to contest the election for one of these Seats. Shinde rejected the offer, as he detested the principle of reserved seats for Marathas. He contested the election from the general constituency of Poona and preferred defeat to the betrayal of his own principles.

Thus, by 1921, Shinde — a nationalist and reformist — lost his popularity with many. He became unpopular with the Liberals for joining hands with the Nationalists in political movement; He was disliked by the Tilakites for criticising Tilak for his orthodox attitude towards the compulsory Education Bill of Poona Municipality. He was out of favour with the Marathas for his advocacy of national unity and nationalism. But he remained undeterred in his views. When the untouchable members of the Poona branch of the Depressed Classes Mission aspired for self-rule for them, he made preparation for retirement from the Depressed Classes Mission which he had nurtured from its birth. He resigned the post of the General Secretary of the Mission in 1922. However, he remained the Secretary of the Poona branch of D. C. Mission till the completion of the construction of Ahalyashram in 1923.

At the time of his retirement from the Poona branch at the age of 51 years, the students, staff and the managing committee of the Poona branch honoured him with an address and urged him to remain with the Institution as the Founder-Trustee for life. Another address which was given to him by the leaders of untouchables as well as of the caste-Hindus conferred on him the honorific title of "Karmaveer" in 1923.

III

After his retirement, Shinde, thought of concentrating on the work of research of the Aryan-Dravidian problem, but due to various difficulties he could not do so.[13] In 1924, Karmaveer was urged by the Secretary of Sadharana Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, to work as the Missionary (Acharya) for the Mangalore Brahmo Samaj. At Mangalore, he was given a big welcome as he had been already associated with the leaders of the Mangalore Brahmo Samaj. Here, he attracted Christians and even Muslims to the Brahmo Samaj by his **kirtana** on the life of the Christian saint, saint Francis of Assissi. By the middle of 1924, Karmaveer participated in the Viakom Satyagraha

for the temple-entry of the untouchables. In his tour of Calicut and Malabar, Shinde delivered lectures on social and religious reforms. However, the Billavas (an untouchable caste in Mangalore), many of whom had lucrative jobs in European companies, were allergic to any political movement. They were scared of the Gandhi cap which V. R. Shinde wore. His participation in Viakom Satyagraha, and his lectures created a great stir among them. They demanded an explanation from Shinde. Shinde got himself relieved from the job in Mangalore and came back to Poona in April, 1925. The Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta appreciating the work of Karmaveer continued to pay him some amount per month till the end of his life. Shinde's effort for the spread of liberal religion was continued in Poona in particular and Maharashtra in general. Shinde decided to spread the teachings of Brahmo Samaj among the lower strata of the society, and for achieving this purpose, he founded **'Kautumbika Upasana Mandal'** (The Association for Family-prayer) with the help of Baburao Jedhe. Baburao Jagtap, Shree Kalabhor and others on 16 June, 1926. He extended its membership to families of all creeds and required the male members to be accompanied by wife and children during their attendance in the Mandal. He toured in a number of talukas in Poona, Satara and Kolhapur districts for the spiritual uplift of the lower classes. During the same year, Shinde happened to read **Dhamma Pada Pitaka** and felt interested in the social organisation conceived by Buddha. To study the Buddhist society and the prevalent Buddhist religious practices, Shinde decided to visit Burma in 1927. Shinde toured in Burma, and made important observations on the facilities for spiritual life, the spread of primary education through the Viharas, the simplicity of the institution of marriage and the institution of untouchability in Burma. When Karmaveer came back to Poona, he found the peasants in Maharashtra facing the calamity of the 'Small-Holdings Bill' which aimed at depriving the numerous small land-holders of their land.[16] The peasants were helpless and lacked powerful leadership.[17] The Karmaveer

took up the cause of the peasants, and gave a fight to the colonial policy of the British Government and the greed of the rich factory owners and the landlords, who supported the Liberal party minister, Shri C. K. Mehta.[18] The Government withdrew the bill in 1928. Shinde by now was 55 years of age, but was quite energetic to attend the situation which would elevate and awaken the masses. In 1930, when Gandhiji started the Civil Disobedience Movement, Shinde undertook a tour in the talukas of Khed, Haveli, Junnar and Saswad in Poona district, and carried Gandhi's movement to the masses in the rural areas.[19] Even here, his tours were not mere political lectures. Shinde gave the political movement the basis of religion, required his companions to observe discipline, to perform **upasana** in the morning, and employed **bhajan** and **kirtan** for the political awakening of the poor and ignorant peasantry in the rural areas. Due to this movement, Shinde was arrested and was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment from 18 May to 14 October, 1930. In the prison Shinde suffered from gout and dysentery, and his health started failing from that time. Bhaskarrao Jadhav, who was then Education Minister, approached Shinde and tried to persuade him to plead for his release, which Shinde refused. On his release from the prison on 14 October, 1930, Karmaveer was given félicitation in a public meeting at Reay-Market in Poona. In December, 1931, Shinde's scholarship and historical research came to be honoured by the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan at Nagpur.

In spite of his failing health, Karmaveer continued to give inspiration and guidance to various movements till the last. In 1931-32, he continued his efforts to save peasants from their victimisation and poverty.[20] Through the Peasant Conference, he advised them to form the Federations of the Unions of Peasents and Workers, and to manage control of market for their produce through taluka organisations of peasants. He urged them to work for their own social progress, and not to look up to anybody else from outside, neither to the government nor

to the Congress for their welfare, but work for their own salvation. In 1933, Karmaveer's valuable book **Asprishya-techa Prashna** (The problem of Untouchability) was published by Navabharat Granth Mala, Nagpur. It is a masterly research work on the problem of untouchability and has remained unsurpassed in its balanced views and practical suggestions. In the same year, 'Sayajirao Gayak-wad prize for literature and social work' was awarded to Karmaveer. The year 1933 was the centenary year of Raja Ram Mohan Roy. Shinde conducted a tour in Maharashtra and outside Maharashtra for delivering lectures on the life and teachings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy.

From 1934 onwards, Karmaveer suffered much due to gout and diabetes; but he was unfailing in his efforts to guide the younger workers such as Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil, Baburao Jagtap, Ramrao Babar and others. He helped Ramrao Babar and Narayanrao Chavan to found Brahmo Samaj at Wai.[21]

Though Shinde was given many a felicitation at many places from Bengal to Malabar, the greatest felicitation was given to him on 18 June, 1934.[22] Mahatma Gandhi was to preside on this occasion. But he could not come and Mathuradas Vasanji occupied the Chair. On this occasion, 41 institutions and 100 respectable individuals offered garlands to Shinde. He was honoured with an address. Shinde, in his speech on this occasion, said, "The honour that you are conferring on me is the honour which goes to my colleagues who come from different castes and creeds of society. They are from various classes, like Muslims, Parsees, Hindus, Christians and Europeans." He further said, "Even though you are honouring me, I shall not remain under your obligations. Whenever the differences between you and me appear, I shall go against you."[23] This was the motto of his life. He remained true to 'Truth' and never compromised with injustice and falsehood; he preferred to live in poverty throughout his life but never lost the peace that he got from a clear conscience. Karmaveer completed the writing of his memoirs

in 1940.[24] It gives a vivid and clear insight into the processes of his life and achievements, and is a masterpiece in Marathi literature. His sister, Janakka, remained his companion and colleague throughout his life in his miseries and glories. Shinde was survived by his three sons, Prataprao, Ravindra, and Vishwasrao. They were of great help to the father. Prataprao continued to take interest in Prarthana Samaj and other social activities. Ravindra helped his father in completing the writing of his autobiography. Vishwasrao, though retarded since childhood, did render service to the people who attended upasanas.

Shinde was an enigma to his contemporaries to whom social reform was a matter of discussion and not for action. Shinde did not respond this way. He reacted to the situation with the view of making the situation bow down to eternal truth and values.

Karmaveer Vitthal Ramji Shinde, a philosopher of Liberal Religion, a social reformer who spent the best years of his life in the cause of the Depressed classes, a great economist who saved the poor peasants from complete annihilation, a great worker of national integration, an educationist and supporter of the cause of liberation of women, died on 2nd January 1944. The centenary of Karmaveer V. R. Shinde was celebrated in Maharashtra on behaif of Maharashtra Government on 21, 22, and 23 April, 1973 under the presidentship of Yashvantrao Chavan, the Foreign Minister of the Government of India,[25] and the year 23 April, 1973 to 22 April, 1974 was observed as Karmaveer Shinde Centenary Year all over Maharashtra.[26]

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Chapter III

TOWARDS LIBERAL RELIGION

Shinde returned to India as a trained religious worker in 1903 A.D. Naturally, he plunged himself into the field of religious reform particularly the movement of Liberal Religion which he made his guiding star.

Liberal Religion

Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter traced the origin of the Liberal religion to the conflict between orthodox Christianity based on the authority of Bible and Pope on one hand, and on the other hand the progress made by science, philosophy and history during 19th century.[1]

The most important basic tenets and guiding principles of Liberal Religion are, according to Carpenter:

(i) the inquiry made by science, religion and philosophy is legitimate, and they be given free scope.

(ii) The fundamental truth of all religions is that God is spirit; and true worship of God is in spirit and truth; it is an act of mind that knits the soul and God into immediate relations.

(iii) The religion of the future will not depend on any book or priesthood. The basic principle of the Liberal Religion is the right of the soul to an open way to God. No Church can limit it to chartered channels. God's grace is freely given to all His children who seek Him in love, humanity and trust.

(iv) The idea of conversion of the people of one country to any religious faith that was born in another

country is rejected. Contact and sympathy may slowly modify the old instincts or create new social ideas.

(v) Yet the aspiration after unity cannot be repressed. Tentative unity can be achieved by forming larger groups of churches with broader liberties, discovery of sympathies and the hope or common ends. However, permanent unity of churches can be achieved only by comprehensive spiritual ideal, and the passionate conviction that the spiritual ideal pervades the universe. This conviction has received support of philosophy, science, history and poetry. The task before the preacher of Liberal Faith is to discover its underlying ideas, to give noble forms to the emotions it excites, and make them potent in conduct of life.

(vi) The three mighty objects that are always before us are the world, man and God. The ordered interpretation of nature done by the investigations of science stresses that the world wears the aspect of one phase of manifestation of the infinite mind, and the science expresses the thoughts of God after Him. Liberal Religion insists upon applying canons of science through the entire field of nature and history. Liberal Religion plants life firmly and faithfully on the world's steadfastness, and it welcomes not only joys and beauties but also the sufferings with the conscience that it can still rely on the order and welfare of the whole. The Liberal Religion believes that 'Harmony with the ever lasting Will alone is peace'.

(vii) Liberal Religion does not believe in the doctrine of 'Depravity of Man'. It no longer considers morality as a positive command from heaven revealed by a supernatural law or by supernatural person, but as a part of the social order, and that the social order is involved in the constitution of humanity itself. The Liberal Religion will be above all things ethical. It will demand the highest virtue in personal character and will not falter with sins. The mighty causes of social justice, of international right, of popular welfare, of temperance and of purity must ever engage its unfaltering support.

The Liberal faith that reposes its faith in God as the Author and Upholder of the world and as Creator, Guide, and Sustainer of man, will draw unfailing guidance from the great historic religions, and it will recognise the debt of the prophet-soul.

It is obvious from this brief account that the idea of Liberal religion could not be new or radical to any one brought up in the free religious atmosphere of India. V. R. Shinde particularly was brought up in a family that was exposed to various sectarian and cultural influences. The **Varkari** sect which was prevalent in the Deccan and which Shinde' family had accepted was a powerful factor in fostering religious tolerance. **Varkari** sect is noted for its God-consciousness, devotion to God, liberality and truthfulness. This no doubt provided a fertile ground for the ready acceptance of Liberal Religion with similar principles by Vitthalrao. However, Vitthalrao could not remain firm in his Varkari tradition in his college career, when he was impressed by agnosticism. The recovery of his faith in theism is credited to Max Muller's lectures by Vitthalrao himself.[2] With his faith thus reaffirmed, Shinde had no difficulty in joining the **Prarthana Samaj** which was closely aligned to **Bhagavata Dharma.** However, it must be pointed out that liberal outlook of the **Varkaris** (i.e., the followers of the Bhagavata Dharma) was limited in its range. The followers of **Varkari** sect certainly did not discriminate on the basis of caste. But they had few opportunities of freely mixing with Muslims or Christians. Though the **Varkaris** recognize all religions as true, this was only an intellectual acceptance without any social bearing. This was the case also with Shinde. He attained true liberal attitude — intellectual as well as emotional — only when he was a part and parcel of the Unitarian movement and was trained at the Manchester College of Theology, Oxford, which was the principal seat of the Unitarian movement.

Manchester College

The Manchester College of Thelogy is described by Vitthalrao as "the most truly liberal institution in the country". It was run by Unitarians. However, it was open for training to missionaries of any religious denomination, and from any country on the surface of the earth. Thus the training in Manchester College liberated the missionary from orthodoxy and bigotry. The motto of the College was 'Truth, Liberty and Religion'. The certificates issued to V. R. Shinde by Principal Drummond and Prof. Carpenter reveal that Vitthalrao wrote 'excellent fortnightly papers on the History of Religion in India', 'a very thoughtful essay' on "**the Theories of Incarnation in Vaishnavism and Buddhism**", read Pali texts of Buddhism, and studied with special interest Hinduism, Mohomedanism, Zoroastrinism, and Religions of China. He studied Old Testament, philosophy and Doctrinal Theology. Vitthalrao was very much impressed by the Unity of thought and practice which the great teachers like Principal Taylor, Dr. Martineau, and Dr. Drummond exhibited in their life-time. Taylor's advice to the students was to apply the knowledge of scriptures and their own conscience to the study of religion and to be liberal to all other sects of Christianity, and to keep one's mind free from partisanship or obstinacy. Dr. Martineau instisted on keeping one's system of thoughts in conformity with the widening knowledge and thought. Dr. Drummond's emphasis was on developing individual ability to conduct the search for Truth and Religion.[3] These teachings went a long way in moulding the thoughts and character of V. R. Shinde.

The Unitarian Society

The Unitarian Society in England is described by Vitthalrao as the "enlightened conscience of the civilized society in western world".[4] At the beginning of the 19th century, Unitarianism was a Biblical Religion accepting miracles and rejecting non-Biblical creeds, resting its hope on **external** revelation and attaching little importance to promises of Natural Religion. This position was

radically changed due to development of scientific knowledge, and knowledge of Biblical and Historical criticism during the 19th Century aided by influence of new thinkers and preachers. as a result of the work of William Ellery Channing and Theodore Parker in the U.S.A., J. J. Taylor (1757-61), J. Hanittan Thom, and above all James Martineau (1897) in Great Britain, and Raja Ram Mohan Roy in India. Unitarianism became a spiritual religion, finding the seat of authority and religion, in religious history, and human experience of the Divine interpreted by Reason and Conscience of Mankind, and welcoming the result of modern Biblical criticism.[5] Vitthalrao very aptly remarks, "The Religion of Unitarians was based on science, and nonetheless their science was based on religion".[6] Moreover, a peculiar characteristic of the free churches like that of Unitarians and Universalists into which Shinde had dived deep, disarm certain natural prejudices against religion by allying the religion with common sense, with the best instincts of the heart, and with the happy service of brotherhood of man. They took for granted the Divine life, and the longing of the hearts of men and women for it, and they seek to quicken it by association, common work and worship.[7] Unitarians' belief that all men are the off-springs of God led to the natural corollary of their urge for social service and public welfare schemes for the uplift of fallen fellowmen. This convinced Shinde of the indivisibility of the Social work from religion.[8] Shinde was very happy to note that Unitarians were seeking to co-operate with non-Biblical religions, one of which was Brahmo Samaj in India.[9]

Conference of Unitarians at Liverpool

While attending the 8th Triennial Conference of Unitarians at Liverpool in 1903, Vitthalrao got very valuable insight as to how public opinion is formed by means of associations, and by periodical conferences. He also got the enlightenment about the importance of the central executive committee and the office of the permanent secretary in a public association. By this time, Unitarians

were thinking of consolidating their church organisation. Triennial conference of the Unitarians were held with this view. Till 1903, 'The British and Foreign Unitarian Association' had voluntarily taken up the responsibility of acting as a central organisation of Unitarians, and was looking after the various activities organised by local churches of the Unitarians. In the triennial conference of 1903, the Central Executive Committee of the Unitarian Conference was elected and the executive took over the charge of the work from 'the British and Foreign Association'. The person holding the post of permanent secretary of the executive committee was granted an adequate salary to enable him to work as a full-time dedicated worker. He was to do the work of co-ordinating the activities of different local churches. Shinde was very much impressed by the actual working of the Conference. The main characteristics of the Conference were the orderly discussion of the various issues, appreciation of the papers representing divergent thoughts of the members, and the serene univocal singing of the prayer by all. The Conference provided valuable guidance to Shinde[10] in conducting similar movements in India afterwards.

While the Manchester College and Unitarians moulded Vitthalrao's ideas of Liberalism in religion, it was the 'Second international Council of Unitarians and other religious thinkers and workers' that gave definite direction to his activities.

The International Council

The International Council of Unitarians and Other Liberal religious thinkers and workers was founded in 1900. It provided a common platform for all the scattered liberal congregations and isolated thinkers and workers for religious freedom. The meeting which was held for this purpose at Boston (U.S.A.) at the time of the anniversary of the American Unitarian Association was addressed by Pratapchandra Muzumdar of India, Rev. Clay Macaulay of Japan, Rev. W. Copeland Bowie from England, Rev. James Hocart of Belgium, Revs. George

Bachelor, Charles W. Wendle and Merle C. Writer of the United States.[11] The first Conference of the Council was held at London in May 1901, and was presided by Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter, professor of Comparative religion in Manchester College. The addresses and papers presented in the council were published under the title of **'Liberal Religious thought at the beginning of the 20th Century'.** A copy of this book was presented to V. R. Shinde on his joining Manchester College by Prof. Rev. J. Estlin Carpenter.* Shinde was impressed by the concept of Liberal Religion considerably. For some time, he harboured the idea that one of his friends, Rajaram Panavalkar, an Arya Samajist, communicate his knowledge of Theosophy, Vegetarianism and practice of Yoga to the westerners, and that Vitthalrao should obtain the knowledge of the Movement of Universalism, Unitarianism and the like. Both of them would travel through Europe, visit Rome, Athens, Cairo, Palestine, Mecca, Japan and China for delivering lectures on Liberal Religion and spreading the idea of brotherhood of the people of the world. The idea could not be carried out due to economic difficulties. However, when the course in Manchester College was completed in 1903, Shinde prepared a practicable and methodical plan for his future religious career in India. Vitthalrao presented this plan in the form of a paper entitled "Liberal Religion in India" while representing the Brahmo Samaj of India at the 'International Council of Liberal Religious thinkers and workers' held at Amsterdam in 1903.[12] The paper is valuable as it indicates Vitthalrao's understanding of the religious condition in India, and his plans for religious reform.

In the paper "Liberal Religion in India", Vitthalrao separated the religion of the individual from the institutional religion. He says, "The religion of the individual so far as it is the matter of the human heart is the same in all places", and he remarks, the religion of the individuals in India has not yet attracted the attention of

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*This copy is preserved in Shivaji Shikshan Sanstha at Poona.

western Theologians." While describing the institutional Hindu religion in India, Shinde states that the Hindu religion suffers from the drawbacks and evils which are peculiar to it. As for the scriptures which are considered infallible, they are quite elastic in meaning. As for the worship, it is localised and symbolised to the utmost in the age-long temples and family adoration in which chosen gods are worshipped. As to the discipline, the religion has never been organised in a church in the western sense of the term. Being a slow development through ages, the present system of discipline is an elaborate system of castes based more on social and family considerations, than spiritual.[13] The episcopacy of Shankaracharaya that came into existence in 8th century, is mainly to safeguard traditions and ritual laws of Hinduism through the machinery of castes and not to minister to the spiritual wants. Only the Brahmans and especially the professional priests, are required to observe certain religious observances, while the rest of the population follow their own forms of customary piety as fasts, vows and ceremonies.[14] The real controlling tyrant who holds them in a hopeless subjection is neither the priest nor the scriptures but the custom, which keeps the masses under its hypnotic influence. Hinduism is waiting for greater purification and restoration in the higher synthesis of the religion of mankind growing out of the soul of its native land.

Shinde mentions that there are in India, similar to the western countries, the reformist liberal religious movements as Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Society. Of these three, Shinde considers Brahmo Samaj as the most fully representing the Liberal Religion as understood by the 'Council' and preparing the ground for the higher synthesis which India was in need of Shinde did not, at that time, consider Prarthana Samaj as an entity separate from Brahmo Samaj. Prarthana Samaj was founded due to encouragement of Keshab Chandra Sen.

"Raja Ram Mohan's religion", said Shinde, "is not mere belief or emotion but life all-round, politics, economics, social and religious reform".[15] The important principles of Brahmo religion, emphasised by Vitthalrao, are universalism, rationalism, spiritualism and practicalism.[16] Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the first investigator of comparative religion in the world, found the seed of Universal Religion in all the great religions. The Trust — deed of the first Brahmo place of worship opened it to all people without distinction for the worship of the Eternal, Inscrutable Being, Author and Preserver of the Universe. The Universalism of Raja Ram Mohan was further more and more realized by his disciplies. Devendranath Thakur discarded the old theory of infallibility of Vedas. However, he considered Vedas and also the sacred literature of the wide world with reverence as common divine treasure. Keshab Chandra Sen, through his New Dispensation, brought out clearly the fundamental harmony in the teaching of all the prosphets. He delivered discourses on the lives of the prophets as an essential feature of the programmes of Brahmo Samaj. A Brahmo is undoubtedly a rationalist accepting the results of modern research in all branches of the study of religion. However, he is mystic in religion, and idealist in thought. The main source of his consciousness is the spirit and not mind. This spiritualism was cultivated by Keshab Chandra Sen. The practicalism of the Brahmo Samaj is seen in the fact that a true follower of Brahmo Samaj is not satisfied only with thoughts and feelings. He is annxious to prove his religion to himself and to the world by his activities of social reform which has been the primary need of India.

The Brahmo Samaj, loyal to its principles is not ready to come to any sort of compromise with conventions of Hindu orthodoxy. It is thoroughly undogmatic in its own faith. The Brahmo Samaj has no sect; its doors are open to all.[17] The Samaj has no professional ministers as such: there is a Central Training Institute at Calcutta for giving training to the Missionaries. The social reform programme included the abolition of caste-system and the

custom of early marriage; promotion of famale education and widow-remarriage. From the very beginning Brahmo Samaj was having very sympathetic relation with Unitarians of England and America.

The Arya Samaj, the second theistic religion was founded in 1875 by Swami Dayanand, a Brahman monk of powerful personality. He was conversant with vedic literature. He regarded the four Vedas as the only authorities and totally rejected all subsequent scriptures. His teachings were based on the Vedas alone. He gave his own interpretation of the Vedas.

The Arya Samaj accepts the infallibility of Vedas; nonetheless it ingeniously interprets the text of the Vedas to bring it in complete harmony with modern thought which is the more dominant element in their faith than the text.[18] In condemning idolatry, and in promoting social reform in all its aspects the Aryas are as sincere as the Brahmos.[19] In spite of their exclusive regard for Vedas their enthusiasm at times glows to white heat of Universal Religion. Lala Ralla Ram, one of their exponents, considers Christianity embodied in the high ideas of Christ, and not in the Church dogmas as true religion. He looked on Islam not as a faith of fire, and sword, but of peace and goodwill to true believers; Buddhism with its ethical loftiness, personal purity and resignation he considered as the inherited treasures for Arya Samaj. Arya Samaj preaches universal brotherhood of men and fatherhood of God.[20] Shinde very admiringly spoke of their marvellous progress in thought, organisation and propagation, extending to 250 congregations, and two big institutions where they were training their missionaries. They accepted converts even from Christianity and Islam.

The Theosophical society, the third theistic organisation, which first arose in America, but afterwards transferred its headquarters to India, had 220 centres in India out of 714 in the whole world. Its dogmatism and occultism apart, it has a largely liberalising influence of its own. Its objects are to form a nucleus of the

universal brotherhood and to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science. It has brought Hindus, Buddhists, Mohamedans, Parsees and Christians together; still they keep up their old connections, making it a matter of pride for the society and a puzzle for others.[21] But in as much as the work of the Society are doubtful as in many respects it upholds toleration, and mutual understanding between various sections of humanity, its work is welcome to all friends of progress. However, the methods of the Theosophical Society are doubtful as in many respects it upholds orthodoxy and ventures too far and too easily on the fobidden region of the Unseen.[22] Nonethless, their practical and earnest efforts to uplift the fallen people by such means as the Central Hindu College at Varanasi and poor Pariah schools at Madras, will command respect from all.[23]

Shinde remarks that all these three theistic movements are in origin independent and in fellowship apart from each other. Of these three, Brahmo Samaj, most fully represents the Liberal Religion as understood by this Council. However, the other two are not against the Liberal movement. Shinde hoped that in time to come they would all be conscious of the larger unity of which the Council was conscious.[24] Moreover, Shinde expressed his faith that Brahmo Samaj, if efficiently organised would offer basis for the operation of a wider movement in the East, for developing fellowship between the Liberal Buddhists of Japan, Burma, Siam and Ceylon on one hand and the Liberal Mohamedans of India and Behais of Persia on the other.[25] For the realisation of that dream, Shinde desired that the East and the West would have to co-operate. Till this time, the orthodox Christianity battled in vain against equally obstinate orthodox religions. Hence forward, Shinde hoped the Liberal Christianity would be co-operating with other liberal movements, for, the future struggle would be not between isms but between warm and palpitating life on one hand, and the cold fossils of all mere "isms" on the

other.[26] He considered the 'Council' as the symbol of the coming millenium.

I

On his arrival in India on 6th Oct. 1903, Vitthalrao decided to devote himself entirely to the cause of the Liberal Religious movement in India. He planned his work very systematically with the view to (1) achieving co-ordination of the liberal religious movement in different parts of India as a step for co-ordinating them with the International movement, and (2) working out the religious movement in the locality in all its aspects, and promoting the material and spiritual welfare of the masses.

For fulfilling his objective Shinde worked through various old organisations, viz., All India Theistic Conference, Prarthana Samaj, Brahmo Samaj of Bengal, Satya Shodhak Samaj, and founded new associations like the 'Family Prayer Association' (Kautumbika Upasana Mandal), Theistic organisation of Depressed Classes Mission, and Brahmo Samaj of Wai.

The ideal of Liberal Religion with its spiritual endowment lack of dogma and priesthood, fellow-feeling, understanding of the real purpose of faith, and the meaning of service, interest in social justice and social welfare, international rights, and social consciousness remained a permanent source of inspiration and guiding star for all of Vitthalrao's activities, as can be seen by a brief review of his career with the different religious reform organisations.

All India Theistic Conference

After returning to India Vitthalrao worked simultaneously as the missionary of Prarthana Samaj and also as an active member of the All India Theistic Conference. He rendered very valuable service to the All India Theistic Conference during 1904 to 1914.

The All India Theistic Conference originated as a wing of the Indian National Congress, and was held for the

first time in 1888 A.D. Justice M. G. Ranade, who was the main initiator, presided over the first session. The sessions of the Theistic Conference also coincided with those of the Indian National Congress. The Conference can be called a truly national movement which aimed at bringing together all the local and provincial theistic churches. The Brahmo Samaj of Bengal, with all its proto-type in different provinces was an important force in the organisation, and this proved its main weakness also. The Conference could not flourish due to the bitter schisms and divisions in Brahmo Samaj in Bengal. There was no regular constitution for the Conference. Between 1888 to 1903, the session was not held in 1893, 1897, 1899, and 1900, and it had no regularly appointed Secretary from 1893 till 1901. Moreover, during this period, the tendency for holding separate provincial conferences, became strong.[27]

On his arrival in India, Vitthalrao attended the Theistic Conference of 1903 at Madras and decided to reorganise it with a view to uniting the religious efforts and to promote liberal religious movement in India on a national basis. Vitthalrao's experience of the Unitarian Triennial Conference of Liverpool gave him the necessary confidence and skill.

Vitthalrao took care to establish personal contact with the leaders in this activity, particularly Vireshlingam Pantalu and Vyankat Ratna Naidu of Andhra, Kailasan Pillay of Tinnevelly, Shivanath Shastri, Pratapchandra Mujumdar, Devendranath Tagore, Hemchandra Sarkar of Bengal, and Prakashchandra Dev of Punjab, for winning their co-operation.[28] The Arya Samajists were entreated by Vitthalrao to join the Conference. As a result of these efforts on the part of Vitthalrao, the Theistic Conference of 1904 that was held at Bombay was a grand success which was admired by many;[29] Consequently Shinde was urged to work as General Secretary for all the future sessions.[30] Shinde shouldered the responsibility of this post till 1914 except in the year 1906 and 1911.

The first important need of the Conference was a constitution for the Conference. The schismatic division of Brahmo Samaj into Adi Brahmo Samaj, Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj and Sadharana Brahmo Samaj was a great stumbling block. Shinde gradually evolved the constitution of the Conference from a social gathering to a 'deliberative body' to suggest ways and means of progress to several samajas, and to promote spirituality by means of united prayers and serious discussions in 1905.[31] Till 1909, the work continued on this basis, which, though limited in nature, was yet wide enough to comprehend all the samajas, so far as representation and attendance were concerned. Between 1905 to 1909 the Conference went round the country holding its annual sessions at Varanasi, Calcutta, Surat, Madras and Lahore respectively and made the representatives of different samajas conscious about the needs of all. Thus completing the first stage of development by 1909 Vitthalrao presented the suggestion of framing a constitution consisting of a permanent office and staff, and funds to implement the resolutions adopted in the Conference.[32] The draft Constitution was framed by the Committee of 4 members viz., Hemachandra Sarkar, Nrityagopal Rai, Lala Raghunath Sahai and V. R. Shinde.[33] It was readily accepted in December, 1911. The constitution named the Conference as 'The All India Theistic Conference', and gave it the objective of promoting theism and service to humanity. The Conference was to be held annually; it was to elect its president, standing committee of 10 members, one each from Bombay, Madras, Punjab, U.P. or C.P., Bihar, Assam and four from Bengal. One or two Secretaries were elected to look after the work and a Local Committee was to be appointed to hold the Conference in the city of its venue.[34]

A very important activity which the All India Theistic Conference was directed to undertake was the compilation of the **Theistic Directory**, the work of which of course, was taken up by V. R. Shinde. This Directory was completed in two parts. The first part contained descriptive notes on

provincial and international Liberal Theistic Churches as the **'Brahmo Samaj in Bengal'** by Shivanth Shastri. **'The Punjab Brahmo Samaj'** by Lala Raghunath Sahai, **'Southern India Brahmo Samaj'** by Padam Raj Naidu, **'The Khasi Hill Mission'** by Umesh Chandra Chaudhari, **'Liberal Religion in Japan'** by Zenno Suke Toyosaki and **'Theism in Western India', 'The All India Theistic Conference', 'The Depressed Classes Mission Society of India', 'The New Light of Persia'** describing Liberal Behai Movement in Persia, **'The Liberal Christianity in Europe'** and **'The Unitarianism in England and America'** all by V. R. Shinde. In addition to these enlightening chapters, the detailed account of each of the 168 local Samajas of all the Indian provinces and of the Theistic Church of Rev. Charles Voysey of London with the names of secretaries, number of practising or active members and sympathisers, the timing of meetings, the establishment of the prayer hall, funds, institutions and a short history is given in **mini print.** The Directory, published in 1912 as a memorable work, was very much admired in all quarters. It helped creation of feeling of fellowship among the laymen of Theistic Samajas in India and in other countries of the world, and was really a revolutionary force fostering sympathy for each other. The Theistic world was brought closer for all the interested people in India and outside and thereby prepared them for an international conference of the Liberal religion.

In 1911, the All India Theistic Conference passed the resolution of holding the session of the 'International Council of Unitarian and other Liberal Religious thinkers and workers in 1914 in India.[35] The sessions of the All India Theistic Conference were being attended from time to time by the representatives from British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and from other western countries. Mr. G. Browne in 1906, Prof. T. Davies in 1908, both of British and Foreign Unitarian Association, Dr. Rudolf Otto of Gottingen University in 1911, were the notable representatives. In 1913, Rev. Dr. J.T. Sunderland of U..S.A. attended the Conference and was honoured with presi-

dential chair with the view of making preparation for the International Conference.[36] A special feature of the work by Shinde was that, though he never had ready money in his hand, he started the work in the belief that money would come only when the work was undertaken. This time too, after taking decision to hold the Conference, funds were collected by the workers of Liberal religion in India, America and Europe for meeting the expenses of the Conference.[37] The Conference was to be held not only in one place but in four places, viz., Madras, Bombay, Lahore and Calcutta; and Dr. Vyankataratnam Naidu, V. R. Shinde, Prof. Sanchiram Sahani and Hemachandra Sarkar were appointed Secretaries for the four places respectively. Shinde who worked as the General Secretary, published pamphlets for propaganda in India and western countries, and busied himself with correspondence with the notable workers and thinkers of liberal religion. The most prominent philosopher of Europe of that time Prof. Rudolf Oiken informed Shinde that he would be attending the Conference.[38]

However, all the enthusiasm and preparation were in vain as the world war broke out in August, 1914. Not only that the International Conference could not be held but war-conditions made even holding of the 'All India Theistic Conference' henceforth impossible due to the rising tide of political upheavals.

Political conflict was not a speciality only between the Indian National Congress and the British government. It spread over even to the participants of Liberal Religious movement. In spite of the high-sounding principles of 'social justice and international right' held as ideas of Liberal Religion Dr. Drummond, the son of the famous Principal Drummond and representative of British and Foreign Unitarian Association, could not feel the International injustice done by the British government in evading the just demands of Indians for truly representative government. V. R. Shinde felt the awkwardness of the situation very bitterly and both of them agreed to differ on it and not to discuss it.[39]

However, V. R. Shinde's efforts did not go waste. (i) Shinde effectively revived and reorganised the All India Theistic Conference and gave it an independent existence by giving it a constitution, its own funds and a permanent office. (ii) He integrated the efforts of the workers of liberal religion in India, checked the separatist and localistic tendency of the provincial religious Conferences and organised them on national basis opening its doors to International Liberal Religion Movement of a wider outlook. Sinde was carrying forward the effort of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Keshab Chandra Sen, Devendranath Tagore and Pratapchandra Muzumdar, who were inspired with the same outlook. For this purpose, the centre of gravity of the religion shifted from Calcutta to Bombay. A very notable achievement of V. R. Shinde was that he successfully harnessed not only the provincial Samajas but also the Schismatic divisions of Brahmo Samaj for a noble purpose of united effort for promoting the Liberal outlook of religion. Moreover, Shinde worked as a guide to rejuvenate the interest of this All India Theistic Conference workers in social work as famine relief work in U.P. and nation-wide agitation for eliminating the 'denial clause' in the Civil Marriage Act III of 1872.[40] A very notable achievement of V. R. Shinde was that the Religious activity continued its existence along with the National movement and was saved from its eclipse by the political movement between 1904 to 1914.

In the International Liberal Religious movement, Shinde made a very notable contribution. It was Shinde who, in Dec. 1895, suggested Dr. Sunderland to institute a scholarship for the benefit of Indian missonaries who desired training in Manchester College of Theology in U.K., or Mediaeval Institute of Training in U.S.A. He himself was benefitted by this scholarship. He revived the All India Theistic Conference that brought all the Liberal Religious Movements together under its auspices. The All India Theistic Conference became such a strong organisation that Shinde could extend invitation to the International Liberal Religious Council to hold its conference of

1914 in India. In this International Conference, the All India Theistic Conference was to add a feather of success to its cap by playing the host to the International Council. The close intimacy between British and Foreign Unitarian Associations and Prarthana Samaj was established through Shinde who instituted postal Mission and Liberal religious reading classes in Prarthana Samaj. He sent a condolence letter on the death of Washington Booker Tellaferro, the Negro Reformist to his institute at Tuskejee in Alabama state, America.[41]

Thus Shinde realised his dream of establishing co-operation between East and West in promoting Liberal religious thought and practice to a considerable extent. This whole movement brought Shinde nearer to all important personalities in this and allied fields. More significant, Shinde grew into a true liberal in respect of not only religion but also in his approach to social, economic and political problems.

Prarthana Samaj

Prarthana Samaj was a prominent socio-religious movement in Western India. It had its inspiration from Brahmo Samaj since 1840 A.D. However, Prarthana Samaj as a public organisation came to be founded by Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, S. N. Bondse, M. N. Shirgaonkar, M. V. Sanjgiri, B. M. Wagle, V. B. Navarange, V. G. Cholkar and Tukaram Tatya Padwal on 31st May 1867. Prarthana Samaj maintained fraternal relationship with Brahmo Samaj of Calcutta and in spite of the Schism in Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj showed affection for all the leaders of Brahmo Samaj such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Devendranath Tagore, Babu Pratapchandra Mujumdar, Keshub Chandra Sen and Shivanath Shastri. Many of the facets of Prarthana Samaj as Sangat Sabha, Arya Mahila Samaj, Moral Training Class, and Subodha Patrika were the contribution of Babu Pratapchandra Mujumdar who stayed in Bombay in 1872 A.D. for more than 6 months.[42] The principles of Prarthana Samaj, though originally an imitation of Brahmo Samaj, grew into a

different direction under the guidance of M. G. Ranade's declaration of "A Theist's Confession of Faith". Prarthana Samaj believed in existence of one only God, without a Second, the Perfect and Infinite, Creator of all, Omnipresent, All-mighty, All knowing, All-merciful and All-holy. They believed in offering worship to God alone and not to his creations. They rejected image-worship and the Incarnation Theory. They insisted that prayer alone is the way of communion with God.[43] Prarthana Samaj was benefited by the guidance given by M. G. Ranade, Dr. R. G. Bhandarkar, Vaman Abaji Modak, etc. but none of them was elevated to the position of Guru. The Samaj made provision for the spread of the above principles through the missionaries like S. P. Kelkar (1882-1894) and Shivaram Pant Gokhale. However, the Samaj did not insist on strict observance of these principles by members outside the premises of the Samaj with the view that it should not alienate the members of the Hindu Society.[44] The Preachers who conducted the divine service made a particular effort to derive the principles of Prarthana Samaj from Hindu Sacred literature like Vedas, Upanishads, and the literature of Saints, rather than from the literature of any other religion. The Samaj also insisted on extending the benefit of the experiences of its gifted members as M. G. Ranade, R. G. Bhandarkar, V. A. Modak and others and published the collections of their **Upasanas** (divine service) and lectures in book-forms. The samaj took interest in actual social reform work as widow-marriage, intercaste dining, foundling asylum and orphanage, and schools for depressed classes. Before 1886 A.D. branches of Prarthana Samaj were soon founded at Thana, Nasik, Pandharpur, Satara, Ahmednagar, Poona, Ahmedabad, Indore and Hyderabad (Sindh).

As compared to connections of Shinde with picked men of higher understanding in All India Theistic Conference, Shinde's relationship with the men of Prarthana Samaj was rather a hard struggle as Shinde tried to improve the machinery of the institution and to improve the tone of its programme. Shinde found that it was not very

easy to inject the spirit of Liberal religion in the rather unreceptive body of Prarthana Samaj. Prarthana Samaj, though, ostensibly founded at the instance of Keshub Chandra Sen, assumed a markedly different character from the Brahmo Samaj. With Prarthana Samaj, the principles of monism, prayer, rejection of idol-worship, and equality and fraternity of men were observed more in thought than in actual life. Though Prarthana Samaj at first made an effort to imbibe the revolutionary ideas of Parmhamsa Sabha, afterwards much modification and slowing down as introduced under the guidance of M. G. Ranade and R. G. Bhandarkar, who decided to bring about reforms that appeared to be in continuity with the old traditions. However, Ranade's insistance on all-round progress in politics, economics, social and religious matters was almost forgotten after his death.

When V. R. Shinde was appointed missionary of Prarthana Samaj in Nov. 1903, he found it in a disorderly condition. The Prarthana Samaj had no constitution to regulate the relations between its main centre at Bombay and the branches at Poona, Satara, Ahmednagar and Ahmedabad. The work of preaching and propaganda had considerably suffered due to failure of the Samaj to make wholesome financial provision on a permanent basis.[45] Moreover, almost the entire generation of the capable and progressive founder members such as Mama Paramanand, V. B. Navarange, V. A. Modak, Atmaram Pandurang, and M. G. Ranade had passed away[46] and very few men in Prarthana Samaj could have the perspective of Liberal Religion Movement of which Prarthana Samaj was considered to be an important unit in Western India.

The members did not accept Shinde's repeated suggestion of making a definite constitution.[47] Nor was proper arrangement made for the provision of the expenses of missionary work. The earlier missionary S. P. Kelkar was paid Rs. 40 plus the expenses of travelling. Still he complained that he could not undertake the work as the travelling expenses were not made available to him in

time. Ultimately, he left the missionary work of Prarthana Samaj and became a missionary of Brahmo Samaj.[48]

Shinde, as referred previously, had received systematic training in Manchester College and had seen how the religious institutions could develop only with a proper constitution, well-paid conscientious missionaries for the spread of the ideas, and a well-paid, devoted, full-time secretary to co-ordinate the work of different centres. He felt very much embarrassed to see that none of these existed in Prarthana Samaj. However, some senior members — Sheth Damodardas Sukhadwalla, Dr. Bhandarkar, Sir Chandavarkar, Dinanath Madgaonkar and Shivarampant Gokhale expressed the hope that a trained missionary such as V. R. Shinde could certainly make the work of Prarthana Samaj much more effective. Shinde was given a salary of Rs. 60 inclusive of all travelling expenses and allowances, and was provided good housing in the newly constructed Ram Mohan Ashrama which consisted of an assembly hall of Prarthana Samaj, guest house, library and living rooms for the missionary. Consequently, Shinde who was already pressed by expenses of a big family, was required to extend hospitality to well-placed important personalities who lodged in Prarthana Samaj during the period of their work. Some members like Sir Narayanrao Chandavarkar, Dinanath Madgaonkar, Navarange, Kelkar, D. G. Vaidya, Laxmibai Ranade and Kargaonkar rendered valuable help to Shinde in his economic difficulties at times, but no regular arrangement for meeting the extra burden was made by the managing council.[49] Yet, this did not dampen Shinde's idealism and zeal for work.

With unceasing effort and working with the available resources, Shinde introduced order in the chaotic conditions. He was able to gather some good workers such as Vamanrao Sohoni, who took up the work of supervising the night-schools, D. G. Vidya, who looked after editing of 'Subodh Patrika', Korgaonkar, who looked after accounts, and K. B. Bhonsale who took up the responsibility of the Foundling house and orphanage at Pandharpur. Thus relieved of the burden of routine work, Shinde

devised new projects such as Religious Reading Class for youths,[50] and the Brahamo Postal Mission,[51] and compiled a handy prayer-book **'Sulabha Sangita'** for the students.[52] He introduced new practices in the Divine Service,[53] by including Hindi devotional songs from Sindh and Bengali songs of Rabindranath Tagore with proper translation into Marathi. He initiated the practice of reciting devotional songs for half an hour before the Divine service **(Upasana)**; boys sang before the service, while women sang the songs during the process of Divine service. **Sulabha Sangita** became so popular that it was issued in 5 editions. The Brahmo Postal Mission distributed books and tracts on the principles of Brahmo Religion and its way of Divine Service (Upasana). The Liberal Religious Reading Class encouraged the young students to read sacred literature of various religions and particularly such books as Armstrong's **God and soul, Paul Deussen's Philosophy of Upanishads,** and the books by Emerson. The Brahmo Postal Mission and the Liberal Religious Reading Class received additional financial support from British and Foreign Unitarian Association, and Shinde was able to distribute 3,438 books and 12,700 tracts of Brahmo Samaj, and 633 books and 5,000 tracts of Unitarian Samaj among the earnest followers. The Young Theists Union which was founded in 1905, was guided by V. R. Shinde. It trained the youths to conduct the sacraments according to Brahmo religion for their family, and secured a reliable means of maintaining continuity of **Anushtanic** membership of the family through this process. These activities of Shinde won admiration as marking a 'new era' in the history of the Prarthana Samaj.

However, V. R. Shinde's ideas of all-comprehensive Liberal religion could not be properly comprehended by many of the members. On the contrary, Shinde's extensive programmes and efforts for the spread of Liberal religion, created difference of opinion among them. Shinde's involvement in the All India Theistic Conference, his attending the programme of the Brahmo Samaj, his founding of Depressed Classes Mission Society of India

and his constant involvement in its work and his interest in organising programmes for the Poona Prarthana Samaj were not considered by some members as part of the activities of Prarthana Samaj. They made an attempt to pin down Shinde to the daily routine work of Prarthana Samaj by framing rules for the work of the missionary, and by appointing a committee to control his activities. They demanded that Shinde should keep the record of his activities in a diary and produce reports of his work immediately according to scheduled time. Shinde was perplexed to find himself landed in this situation. He was interested more in work and did not like that his time should be wasted in drawing reports. The work was growing rapidly and extensively. Shinde was not against framing rules but he desired that the rules should be framed after the development of the work.[54]

It must be noted here that Shinde was a leader and organiser, and was devoted to a cause. He was not to be treated as a mere paid employee. Further, Shinde, by his numerous activities and world-wide contacts, grew to be greater than what the leaders of the Prarthana Samaj desired. Therefore, the tension became inevitable.

A great explosion against Shinde took place when Shinde's religion did not exclude sympathy for Tilak when the national leader was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment in July 1908. Shinde, in his Divine service, wished good health and well being for Tilak. Bhandarkar and Chandavarkar were greatly disturbed at this Divine service.[55]

Shinde's difference with Bhandarkar as to whether Depressed Classes Mission should be an activity under the auspices of only Prarthana Samaj or otherwise were of a more basic nature. Shinde wanted Depressed Classes Mission to grow freely so that the moderate views of Prarthana Samaj members should not come in the way of radical reforms visualised by the Depressed Classes Mission. He desired that the Mission should be free to get cooperation and service from all posible sources. Sir Narayanarao Chandavarkar agreed with V. R. Shinde and the

Depressed Classes Mission came to be considered independent of the Prarthana Samaj.[56] Furthermore, Shinde's Sympathy for the lower classes involved him in presiding over a meeting that was held for revival of Satyashodhak Samaj in 1910, at Bombay.[57] The founder of Satyashodhak Samaj, Mahatma Phule had very bitterly criticised the activities of Prarthana Samaj and Brahmo Samaj[58] as being mainly for educated people. Evidently Prarthana Samajists did not have much sympathy for the revival of the Satyashodhak Samaj.

The differences became so acute that to relieve himself from the restrictions which accompanied the salary, Shinde, ultimately, deceided on his own accord not to accept the salary which he was receiving from Prarthana Samaj. The Committee of Prarthana Samaj passed the resolution of relieving Shinde from the post of the missionary of Prarthana Samaj, and Shinde was informed accordingly in November, 1910.

Howsoever dissatisfied V. R. Shinde might be with the narrow views of the small group of men in Prarthana Samaj, it cannot be doubted that Prarthana Samaj provided Shinde a good receptive audience for his sermons expounding very high philosophical thoughts. It provided sincere workers for him to help him in the work of All India Theistic Conference, and in his Depressed Classes Mission. His letters from London, his lectures, and his sermons were published along with the collection of lectures of M. G. Ranade,[59] V. A. Modak, Bhandarkar and N. G. Chandavarkar. Shinde's work was admired by some of the members so much so that even after his retirement from Prarthana Samaj, they continued to collect an amount of Rs. 60 every month from among themselves, and handed it over to V. R. Shinde for two years.[60] Shinde too did not sever his relations with Prarthana Samaj and attended their programmes, gave his preachings, and stayed in Ram Mohan Ashram whenever he came to Bombay after his leaving Bombay in 1912.

Work in Brahmo Samaj

Though Shinde ceased to be Missionary of Prarthana Samaj, he could not cease to be the Missionary of Brahmo religion which he considered as the Mission of his life. Shinde worked for maintaining the spirit of the principles of Brahmo religion and also for reaching it to the humblest. For maintaining the original spirit and for spreading the Brahmo religion among the masses, he gave cooperation to Brahmo Samaj. He made efforts to guide the Non-Brahman Movement on a new footing.

Shinde was an **Anushtanic Brahmo** following the **Navavidhan**, he considered himself to be the preacher of Brahmo Samaj, as he was selected for training in Manchchester College by the Committee of Brahmo Samaj in 1900. Between 1903 to 1924, Shinde worked for Brahmo Samaj as a voluntary preacher. After his retirement from the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India in 1923, Hemachandra Sarkar invited him for rest in the Sadharana Ashrama at Calcutta and appointed him as the Missionary of Brahmo Samaj in 1924, in which capacity Shinde continued his work till his last.

Shinde attended the **Maghotsava** of Brahmo Samaj for the first time in January, 1904. At that time, Shinde travelled through Madras, Andhra, Orissa and Bengal and found the Brahmo Samajas in those provinces suffering from degeneration due to the rivalry among Adi Brahmo Samaj, Navavidhan Brahmo Samaj and Sadharana Brahmo Samaj. Samaj Halls were in deserted condition at some places. The **Maghotsava** at Calcutta was being celebrated in a spirit of contest and exclusion. The spirit of socio-religious reform had cooled down and the minds of the progressive youth were divided. Shinde paid his respects to all the leaders of different Brahmo Samajas in Calcutta from Shivanath Shastri of the younger generation to Devendranath Tagore of old generation. Devendranath Tagore expressed great satisfaction over Shinde's arrival and wished that V. R. Shinde and Shivanath Shastri would lead the movement henceforth.[61]

Shinde turned his prohecy into reality. Since 1906, in his tours for the work of All India Theistic Movement, Shinde made it a point to visit the Brahmo Samajas in various towns and cities and made efforts to bring about rapproachement between the rival local Brahmo Samajas and persuaded them to have a common programme as he had done at Bankipur with the help of Bhai Prakash Chandra Roy.[62] He made efforts to revive the organisation of deserted Samaj halls as he did in Kathihar. He revived the Samaj at Bhagalpur by infusing enthusiasm among the youths.[63]

Shinde was very much impressed by the co-operation that was given to him by the followers of various Brahmo Samajas in his work; he expressed his satisfaction that he had become a follower of Brahmo Samaj, as he got the divine experience as to how the work of religion, when done with sincerity, achieves smooth progress. At Dubri, in 1907, he said that the honour and the satisfaction that he got as a missionary of Brahmo Samaj was much greater than even the honour and happiness which he would get by occupying a royal throne.[64]

After V. R. Shinde's appointment as official missionary of Sadharana Brahmo Samaj in 1924, Shinde was asked to help Dr. Drummond of British and Foreign Unitarian Association in selecting the Brahmo Samaj candidate for training in Manchester College in 1924.[65] Shinde worked as the Missionary of Brahmo Samaj at Mangalore in 1924. Though his Divine Services were appreciated by the Mangalore Samaj, his lectures on socio-religious reform generated conflict. Shinde was consistently supported by the Secretary and the President of Brahmo Samaj.[66] He actively participated in the centenary celebration of Brahmo Samaj in 1928 not only in offering Divine service but also by making a valuable contribution to the development progressive thought. In the social conference, the problem of giving economic freedom to women and youth was being mooted. Shinde said, "In the last century, Brahmo Samaj gave a call for abolition of slavery and the

slavish tendency. In this century, the people are awakened; the youths are getting liberty and women are getting equal status along with men. Till this time, all these activities were limited only to the emotional activity of Religion. Next stage of awakening is economic freedom. If Brahmo Samaj refuses to grant it, Brahmo Samaj will perish in the very struggle of freedom which it itself had started".[67]

While presiding over the meeting for reviewing the achievements of Brahmo Samaj, Shinde analysed the work of Brahmo Samaj in Bengal, outside Bengal and work among the lower classes. In the tour for propaganda, Shinde was urged to join, as the Brahmo Samajists in Bengal were not much inclined to go outside Bengal. Shinde undertook to conduct the tour in East Bengal, North Bengal, Bihar, U.P., and Punjab. This tour was accompanied by devotional songs and **Kirtanas** accompanied by musical instruments. Shinde in his speech made reference to the movement of the Varkari sect in Maharashtra and how the teachings of Tukarama were revived by Prarthana Samaj. Shinde's speech on Rammohan Roy's work was appreciated by Satish Chandra Chakravarty and Bipin Chandra Pal so much so, that after his speech they embraced Shinde with great affection.[68] Shinde showed interest in visiting the institutions run by Namashudras in 1930. In the celebrations of Raja Rammohan Roy's centenary, Shinde toured in Maharashtra and Karnataka delivering speeches on the achievements of Raja Rammohan Roy.

However, Shinde's reverence for Brahmo Samaj was not unmixed with some dissatisfaction with it. There were certain loopholes in it. Shinde found that Brahmo Samaj and its prototype Prarthana Samaja were working mainly for the higher strata of the society and did not care much for the uplift of the lower classes. Shinde, in one of his lectures, had previously alluded to the allegory that Brahmo Samaj was like the skin of the tree that protected the stem of Brahmo religion. He said, "If the Samaj loses

the principles of this religion, the Samaj will be dead and will be nothing less than firewood, but the internal spirit of Brahmo religion will flourish with the protection of a new Samaj."[69]

II

Among Lower Classes

When Shinde turned his attention to the lower classes in western Maharashtra, he found that there were already two movements in western Maharashtra since the last quarter of the 19th century. One was Satyashodhak Samaj and the other was Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj had won the admiration of Shinde as a Liberal Religion Movement. Shinde had even planned certain programmes of spreading Liberal Religious ideas in the world with the help of the Arya Samajists. His work for the Prarthana Samaj brought Shinde in cordial relationship with Swatmanandji and Atmanandji. Atmanandji was in charge of schools for untouchables in Baroda state. However, Shinde's expectations about the Liberal Religious activity of Arya Samaj were not realised. The Arya Samaj — both by its Vedic pattern and western pattern — was undoubtedly doing good work in the field of education. But the Arya Samajists could not go much further than the orthodox Hindu religion, especially in upholding infallibility of Vedas, the cow-worship and the hierarchial **Varna** system. Their advance over the orthodox was mainly the **Shuddhi** movement which admitted the converts back to the fold of Hindu religion.[70] This indirectly implied hostility towards Muslims and Christians. In 1904, the Arya Samajists did not attend the community dinner due to the dread of pollution, as some Muslim members of Prarthana Samaj would attend the dinner.[71]

In the course of his varied activities, Shinde felt like placing confidence in the ordinary workers with family responsibility than in the special workers of the Arya Samaj who were not having any such responsibility.[72] Shinde says, "Whenever it was difficult to continue arguement Swatmanandji used to wield the rod in his hand."

The Arya Samajists desired unity in the country by converting the followers of other religions, particularly Muslims to Hindu religion. During the first quarter of the 20th century, their proselytising activity became militant against the Muslims to avenge what the Hindus had suffered during the five hundred years of Muslim rule. This activity of theirs was fostering the fanatic Hindu nationalism, but was certainly derogatory to the principles of Liberal religion. Shinde abhorred the activities of proselytisation by Muslims, Christians and Arya Samajists as well from the depth of his heart. He felt no regard for swami Shraddhanand[73] due to the very programme adopted by him. Though the Arya Samaj was supposed to be working for uplift of the masses, in western India, it attracted the urban population, and did not reach the rural areas.

The Satya Shodhak Samaj founded by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Propagated the **'Sarvajanika Satya Dharma'** in 1873 A.D. **The Sarvajanika Satya Dharma** believed in God as the Creator of the Universe **(Nirmika)**. The **Satya Dharma** rejected idol-worship, scriptural authority, and mediation of the priest. It stressed the importance of conscience, kindness, purity and industriousness to further the blessings of **Nirmika** to the people along with **'Namasmarana'** and prayer. Phule believed in the truth of all religions including Islam and Christianity. He hated the Hindu religion for its hierarchical caste system as well as for the domination of the priestly class in social, economic and religious matters, and the exploitation of the 'Shudras' and Atishudras' by it.[74] However, Jyotiba was prepared to come to compromise with the Brahmans if they discarded the scriptures that upheld the principles of inequality and injustice and if they behaved on the basis of equality of all. Jyotiba's role was that of a reformist in religio-social matters and he did not wish to found a religious sect as such.[75]

From various castes, Jyotiba got a number of supporters, the most notable of whom were Raosahib Rajanna

Lingu, Ramayya Ayyawaru, Narayanrao Lokhande, Dr. Santuji Lad, Vitthalrao Mahamuni and Narayanrao Navale. After the death of Jyotiba in 1890, the followers carried on his work among the lower classes through the paper **Dinabandhu** and by organising entertainment programmes such as **Jalasas**.. They contested elections for municipalities and Local Boards all over Maharashtra and rendered service to workers.[76] However, they could not develop any religious activity except marriage ceremony without the mediation of the priest, any further.[77] After the death of Jyotiba Phule, Ayyawaru and Dr. Lad celebrated the anniversary of Satyashodhak Samaj at Thana,[78] and attended the **upasanas** in Prarthana Samaj of Bombay. V. R. Shinde came in contact with Dr. Lad while he was working as Missionary of the Prarthana Samaj. Shinde's desire to found the Depressed Classes Mission was enthusiastically supported by Dr. Lad. In 1908, Shinde mediated to resolve a dispute between Satyashodhakite peasants and Brahmans at Sonai in Nagar district amicably.[79]

In the meanwhile, between 1899 to 1905, the **Vedokta** controversy in Kolhapur inflamed the bitter feeling between Brahmans and non-Brahmans. The **Vedokta** controversy centred round the dispute as to whether **Vedic mantras** or **Paranic Mantras** should be recited for the vituals of the Marathas.[80] According to ancient tradition, all the three Varnas — Brahmans, Kshatriya and Vaishyas — had the privilege of getting their sanskaras performed with Vedic mantras. During the upheavals of Jainism and Buddhism, the Brahman priests had deprived other Varnas of the privilege of Vedic mantras; puranas that were composed by that time declared that there were no Kshatriyas and Vaishyas in existence. According to Puranas there were only two Varnas — one is Brahman and the other is Shudra. **Shudrachar Shiromani** by Nrusinha Shesha (1400 to 1450 A.D.) and the Shudra—Kamalakar written by Kamalkar Bhatta (early half of the 17th century) prescribed the rule that the Vedic mantras should

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be receited only for the rites for the Ceremonies of Brahmans, while the Purana-mantras should be recited for the rites for the Shudras.[81] Consequently the Brahman priests particularly in the Deccan, disputed the claims of the Maratha rulers to the Kshatriya status, though in the north, Brahman priests continued to perform the rites for the Rajput rulers with the Vedic Mantras. The Great Shivaji also had to fight a contest with the Brahmans in the Deccan in 1774, A.D. and got his Kshatriya status recognised with the help of Gaga Bhatta from Benares. But after his death again the Brahman priests were impudent enough to deny to perform Vedic rites to Shivaji's descendants and the issue was again raised by Chhatrapati Pratapsingh Maharaj of Satara in 1832, A.D. in the Conference of the Pandits. Pratapsingh Maharaj again got the Kshatriya status of his family re-established and the Vedic rites were performed for his family. In the Kolhapur branch of the Chhatrapati family, the Vedokta issue was raised by Chhatrapati Shahu when he came to know that the priest was reciting Purana-mantras for his rites and demanded that Vedic mantras be recited for his family rituals as his family was a Kshatriya family.

The Rajopadhya of Shahu Chhatrapati disputed the Kshatriya status of Shahu Chhatrapati. A religious authority like Shankarancharya as well as a political leader like Tilak, supported the stand taken by the Rajopadhye. However Shahu was successful in getting the issue decided in his favour in 1905. The Vedokta controversy gave impetus to the activities of the Arya Samaj and the Satyashodhak Samaj. The Arya Samaj acknowledged the Kshtriya status of the Maratha Shahu Chhatrapati. and his relatives. This ultimately resulted in elevating the superiority of the Marathas of the 96 families.

Shinde is said to have enunciated his views on this issue in 1926, A.D., a reference to which has been made by one Mr. Ganpatrao Bhikajirao Jadhav in his letter to V.R. Shinde. However, the exact text of the views expressed by him is not available. In 1925, in his speech on the Development of Bhagavat Religion, Shinde expressed his

opinion that Vedic rituals was a magical attempt to control the natural phenomena. The Vedic-mantras were composed by the Brahman priests to raise their importance in the religious practices and to increase their material benefits. These mantras aimed at mere material benefit and not salvation. The Puranic-mantras, said Shinde, was a mere burglary of the Brahman priests as they started interfering in the five Bhagavat sects and appropriated the work of offering worship to images, organisation of temples, and the work of writing the Puranas, as their own monopoly. They performed these rituals with Puran Mantras. This act of the Brahman priests revived the supremacy of the Brahman priests, which the five Bhagavatas had originally aimed to destory. Shinde considered both the Vedic mantras and Puranic mantras as quite ineffective in giving salvation to the devotee. This salvation he could very well get, by faith in God, knowledge and devotion and good deeds.[82] When a meeting for establishing the branch of Satyashodhak Samaj was held by Dr. Lad, and Ayyawaru in Bombay in 1910, V. R. Shinde presided over the meeting, and the Satyashodhak Samaj branch was established in Bombay in the same year.

In Kolhapur, Bhaskarrao Jadhav founded the 'Shahu Satyasodhak Samaj' in 1911. From 1911 onwards, the Satyashodhak Conference came to be held annually. Ramayya Ayyavaru presided over the first conference of 1911, and the resolutions for reiterating the principles, of paternity of God and fraternity of men, direct communion with God without priestly mediation, spread of education and loyalty to British government, were passed.[83] Shinde attended the Conferences of Satyashodhak Samaj annually. His participation in the Conference and his views impressed many of the members with the result that Shinde was elected as the president for the Conference to be held in 1916, A.D. at Nipani by the local committee. However, Bhaskarrao Jadhav and Annasaheb Latthe did not approve of it and the invitation extended to V. R. Shinde for presiding over the Conference was with-

drawn.[84] In spite of this insult, Shinde attended the conference mainly on account of his sincerity towards the cause of Satyashodhak movement.

The differences of opinion between Shinde and Bhaskarrao Jadhav over the policy of Satyashodhak movement were of a basic nature. Shinde traced the Protestant movement in India from **Upanishads**, Buddhism, to the **Varkari** sect which was developed by the saints without caste-distinction. Shinde was of the opinion that in spite of the appropriation of the management of the temple by the priests, the deity of the above sects, and the manner of their worship are thoroughly democratic, and free from rituals.[85] Further, Shinde held that the Brahmo Samaj too is a protestant movement similar to Satyashodhak Samaj,[86] and the relationship and co-operation between the two was desirable. Shinde also stressed the point that the Satyashodhak Samaj need not exclude the Brahmans who subscribed to its ideals.[87] Bhaskarrao Jadhav holding narrow views about Satyashodhak movement did not favour Shinde's view. The difference of views between Shinde and Bhaskarrao Jadhav widened further both in the social as well as in the political movement between 1916 to 1920, A.D.

Shinde also differed from Shahu Chhatrapati when he founded the institution of Kshatra Jagadguru. Shinde was chosen by Chhatrapati Shahu for the above post due to his qualifications and experience in the work of religious movement. A very prestigious and lucrative post of **Kshatra Jagadguru** could not detract Shinde from his firm disapproval of the institution of priestly authority in any form.[88]

However. Shinde was benefited by his close associations with the young generation of Satyashodhakites with whose help he organised the spiritual service for the lower classes, and launched the movement of '**Kautumika Upasana Mandal**', and founded a solid organisation of 'The Wai Brahmo Samaj'.

Kautumbika Upasana Mandala

In the political turmoil of conflicting caste-interest of 1917-20, Shinde worked for national integration by organising the **Bahujana Samaj Paksha** of the masses. After this turmoil was over, Shinde returned to work for spiritual uplift of the masses.

With the help of the young associates from Satya-shodhak Samaj such as Baburao Jedhe (the President of Satyasodhak Samaj at Poona, Baburao Jagtap (the founder of Shivaji Maratha High School), Ganpatrao Shinde, Ramrao Shinde Advocate, Gangaram Kalbhor, and Janakka, V. R. Shinde started conducting upasana for a group of their families. After a year, when this practice became popular, Shinde founded the '**Katumbika Upasana Mandala,** (Association of Families for Prayer) on 16 June, 1926, and the constitution for the Mandala was prepared.[89]

The objectives of the Mandal were to achieve the uplift of the people of the lower classes, who were devoid of spiritual life. This was to be achieved by making an effort for the uplift, not of the individual but of the family, which shinde considered was the primary unit for this organisation. With this view, membership was given to the family and not to the individual. The man of the family was to attend the meeting of the Mandala along with all his family members. This condition was laid down mainly to prevent the double role often played by men in the family and outside it, and to make men more amenable to the family and the society as well. This was also going to help the urge towards spiritual life by making the entire family participate in it. He aimed at improving the social behaviour of the families towards one another by closely associating them in the spiritual programme of devotional songs, **Kirtanas** and **Vanopasana** (Upasana in a park outside the town.

In the Programme of **Upasana,** Shinde introduced fusion of **Satya Dharma** and **Brahmo Dharma.** The principles of **Brahmo Dharma,** pleaded Shinde, were the same

as **Satya Dharma.** However, the practising of **Satya** Dharma could be facilitated by the technic employed by **Brahmo Dharma**. This technic was evolved in Brahmo Dharma by Keshub Chandra Sen who showed tolerance twoards other religious thinkers as Maharshi Dayanand, Ramkrishna Paramhamsa· and the saints of other religions. The reciting of the lives and the teachings of such saints with proper interpretation was helpful in giving guidance in spiritual life.[90]

The programme of Upasana that simplified the lofty thoughts and principles of religion was similar to that of Universalists and Unitarians who based religious principles on commonsense,[91] and made them interesting to women and children, appealed to best instincts of the heart and the brotherhood of man. The story of the wife of Tukaram, Awadi by name, was made interesting and instructive by V. R. Shinde. Awadi is depicted in popular imagination as the trouble-maker for Tukaram. Shinde gave a different interpretation to the story as to how the materialism of Awadi was providing facilities for the spiritual activities of Tukaram. His lyric poem on 'Jijabai', the mother of Shivaji, his "Dialogue between the new Reform ond Old Tradition" enhanced the spiritual and social calibre of the audience.

The membership of the Mandal was open to any family without any discrimination of caste, status, or religion. It paved the way for fusion of different castes, high and low.[92] Shinde conducted tours for organising **Kautumbika Upasana Mandals** at various taluka places in Poona, Satara, Kolhapur, and Nagar.[93] These tours were undertaken for the service of the lower classes and their integration with other classes in society.

Till this time, Shinde worked out the schemes organised by others by putting his spirit into it. The **Kautumbika Upasana Mandala** and **Wai Brahmo Samaj** were solely his creations which he successfully developed with tender care.

Wai Brahmo Samaj

When the plinth of Kautumbika Upasana for the lower classes was prepared, Shinde took up the work of constructing the structure of Wai Brahmo Samaj on it. The Wai Brahmo Samaj stood as the ideal organisation giving guidance to further consolidation and movement in the spiritual life in the rural areas.

The town of Wai was the stronghold of orthodox Brahmans, who enjoyed the patronage of the Peshwas[94] This patronage created a great gap between the well-placed Brahman class and the lower class of peasants. Afterwards, it fed the fires for the spread of the Satya-shodhak movement among the non-Brahmans of Wai. In 1920, Satyashodhak Samaj was founded at Wai.[95] **Wai Pradnya Pathshala** and **Satyashodhak Samaj** were the two extreme limits in the social life of Wai. When Shinde started his visits to Wai in 1925, he impressed his audience with his ideas on the need for Unity of Brahmans and non-Brahmans in the society, abolition of untouchability and the spiritual activity of Brahmo Samaj.[96] When he came to Wai to deliver lecture on the achievements of Raja Rammohan Roy at the time of the death-anniversary of Rammohan Roy in 1933, the active youths in Wai insisted that Brahmo Samaj should be established at Wai. Thus Shinde's desire was fulfilled. He gave instructions to the youths there, tested their perseverence through his letters and personal attendance. His suggestions that at least 5 members must be **Anushthanic** members,[97] that their family life must be raised, they must have members from different castes and must not feel shy of criticism, that the preachers should come forward from among them, that a responsible man should always stay there on the premises, were all carried out.[98] Shinde secured the co-operation of the Shastris of the Pathshala who opened the doors of the Path Shala for community dinners of all the castes including untouchables.[99] Shinde solicited the co-operation of the Prarthana Samajists from Bombay and Poona in his effort for collecting building fund and conducting Upasana. D. G. Vaidya, B. B. Keskar and his

wife, B. B. Korgaonkar, Yajneshwarpant Bhandarkar, the Navarange family, and T. C. Khandwalla joined hands with him.[100] Thus the integrated effort of non-Brahmans, Brahmans, Satyashodhakas and Brahmo Samajists guided by Shinde Crystallized in the foundation of Wai Brahmo Samaj. The Trust-Deed of the Wai Brahmo Samaj is similar to that of Brahmo Samaj of Raja Rammohan Roy in throwing open its doors to all men from all sects.[101]

The Wai Brahmo Samaj prospered under the guidance of capable organisers such as Narayanrao Chavan, Jejurikar, Ramrao Babar, and the succeeding generation made the Brahmo Samaj more effective by organising Karmaveer Shinde high school. The town of wai reverberates with the memory of Shinde which endures in the square in the city after his name, and displaying the oil-paint portrait of Shinde in the Municipal Hall. The present President of the Wai Brahmo Samaj, R. N. Chavan, who was brought up in this atmosphere breathes the thoughts of Liberal Religion,[102] in his article "**Satya Shodhak Samajache Brahmo Samajat Rupantar**" in Subodh Patrika (30 July, 1950):

"The Brahmo Samaj of Bengal and Satyashodhak Samaj of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, though established in two different provinces are indentical not only in the principles of inquiry of truth, constructive programme, and intellectualism, but also in the name. 'Brahmo' means 'Satya'. Jyotiba's Satyashodhak Samaj was founded to remove the Brahmanic priestly domination in religion, and inequality in the society. These evils will be abolished with the advance of proper education. The Brahmo religion too, believes in spiritual progress and social reform. The spiritual progress of Satyashodhak Samaj will be helped by the well developed literature and programme of Brahmo Samaj. The Liberal Religion movement, which both of them represent, will be benefitted by comparative study, tolerance and co-operation of each other and not by sectarian isolation. Thus V. R.

Shinde bridged the gap between the two isolated movements namely Brahmo religion and Satyashodhak Samaj and is a true successor of Mahatma Phule".

In 1925. Shinde made a very notable contribution to the study of the History of Religion in India by a series of five lectures, which he delivered in Prarthana Samaj at Poona between 17th to 31st July intermittantly.[103] On the basis of the research done by Prof. Max Muller, Pargiter, Dr. Bhandarkar, Dr. Havell, Prof. Garbe, Dr. Farquhar, and his own study of comparative religion, and study of original works, Shinde stated that India had a tradition of liberal democratic religion in the form of Bhagawat religion since pre-historic times. Though this tradition was at times vitiated by the institution of the priestly class, who tried to establish their supremacy in it, the liberal democratic Bhagavat Religion, appeared again and again in different forms.

Shinde's Contribution to the Religious Movement

V. R. Shinde imbibed the spirit of the movement of Liberal Religion in the Western countries during 1901-1903 due to his family background of Varkari sect and contact with Liberal Religious thinkers and workers. Shinde found that though the traditional Brahmanic Hindu religion was professed to be the religion of a vast number of Hindus, it ministered to the spiritual needs of only the higher castes and not to all the masses of its followers. He found the Hindu religion itself lacking in precise principles, universal object of worship, church organisation and discipline. The discipline imposed by the hierarchical caste-system required only the professional priests to keep up the religious observances, while the masses were left to their animistic worship, vows, fasts and pilgrimage. Shinde felt that Hindu religion stood in need of purification, restoration, and its absorption into the higher synthesis of the Religion of mankind.

He compared the modern religious movements in India with the concept of 'Liberal Religion, and found Brahmo Religion conforming very closely

with the concept of 'Liberal Religion'. In pursuance with the aims and objectives of the 'Liberal Religion Movement', V. R. Shinde worked for introducing Unity in the Liberal Religious movement for restoring the principles of Liberal Religion, and for spreading its principles among the masses who were devoid of any religion. For introducing Unity in the Liberal Religion Movement, Shinde utilised the organisation of 'The All India Theistic Conference', making Brahmo Samaj the centre of this activity, and desired to bring about unity in the Liberal Religion Movement in the eastern countries. Working in the capacity of the General Secretary of the All India Theistic Conference, Shinde got very good response from the various theistic organisations. However, his desire to hold the Conference of 'International Council of Unitarian and other Liberal thinkers and workers' in India could not be realised due to the outbreak of World War I. In the turmoil of the World War, the All India Theistic Conference and the International Council both ceased to exist. Shinde's work in the field was a continuation of the tradition of Raja Rammohan Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen, and Pratap Chandra Muzumdar. However, this is to be noted that Shinde shifted the seat of Liberal religious activity from Bengal to Western India.

In his effort to maintain the spirit of the principles of Liberal Religion, Shinde found the organisation of Prarthana Samaj falling short to Liberal Religion. Shinde resigned his salaried post of Missionary of Prarthana Samaj, but kept cordial relations with the sincere workers of the Prarthana Samaj. He also tried to keep his relations with Brahmo Samaj, but found that the Brahmo Samaj, though it observed the principles of Brahmo religion, was not extending its liberality to the lower classes. For achieving the spiritual uplift of the lower classes, Shinde carried his propaganda to the Depressed classes and the masses. Shinde joined hands with the Satyashodhak Samaj organisation which had come into existence avowedly for the welfare of the masses, but he found the

leaders indulging more in search of political power than in the search of Truth.

Shinde organised an independent association of 'Kautumbika Upasana Mandala' in 1927, where he pursued the programme of utilising Family as the primary unit for the spread and consolidation of spiritual activity. He created close association of families irrespective of caste and status in attending and participating the spiritual activity of the upasana, reciting and elucidating the devotional songs composed by the saints. Many times, he conducted the upasana outside the town in a park to make it more effective in close association with Nature. His movement of Kautumbika Upasana Mandala became popular in taluka places.

In one such taluka place at Wai, Shinde's concept of founding a centre of Liberal Religious Association for the benefit of lower classes was realised in the form of Wai Brahmo Samaj. Against the background of caste division, political factions, and religious discrimination, Shinde was able to create an atmosphere of tolerance and participation in common activity by both Brahmans and non-Brahmans. He evolved the urge for spiritual uplift in the non-Brahman Satyashodhakites, and secured the co-operation of some of the enlightened Prarthana Samajists from Bombay and Poona for the effort of spiritual welfare of the lower classes. The Religion of the Sarvajanika Satya Dharma of Jyotiba Phule was complemented by the growth of different facets of religion achieved by Brahmo Religion. In achieving this rapproachement, the protestant movement of the Varkari sect was utilised for providing the basis for this union.

In this long march of reaching the ideal of Liberal Religion, Shinde remained uncompromising. He severed his relations with Prarthana Samaj, and suffered insults in the Satyashodhak samaj. He was never lured to any lucrative pursuit as that of the office of Kshatra Jagadguru though he was suffering from the miseries of poverty. At last, he achieved his goal of extending the

message of Liberal Religion to the masses in whatever small scale it might be. His sincerity of purpose brought help to him in men and money from various quarters, and Shinde got the evidence of his faith that the work of True Religion if conducted on right lines continues to be aided by varied forces.

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APPENDIX

A RARE ARTICLE

LIBERAL RELIGION IN INDIA*

By

V. R. Shinde

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BRAHMO SAMAJ, INDIA

The real religion of earnest minded individuals, in as much as it is a mere matter of the human heart is the same in all places; and its progress also in course of time is pretty nearly the same along the lines of human culture. The individual religion therefore has remained surprisingly loyal to its source—the heart and conscience, even in the teeth of the most rotten orthodoxies. India too is not an exception to this rule. Viewed from this individual point of view, the Hindu ideals and their realizations have yet hardly met even that recognition by Western theologians, which Western scholars are so ready to give. But I think the practical concern of this council is to deal more with the institutional than with the individual aspect of religion or in other words to try to bring as far as possible the institutions of religion in harmony with the native experiences of the individual. Before proceeding therefore to describe Liberal Religion in India. I say a few words about the conditions otherwise of the institutional religion there.

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The drawbacks and evils of the Hindu orthodoxy are in many respects different to those of the West. As to faith, Hinduism past or present, has never had a hard and fast table of creeds. The scriptures are theoretically infallible; but being all written in a language long dead and wonderfully elastic in meaning, they do not trouble the average Hindu unless he meddles with them. As to worship, it is extremely localized and symbolized. The continent has its ages-long sacred shrines and the towns their richly endowed temples; nay every house has a separate room, called the "Gods' room" containing a sacred case of chosen gods. As to discipline, the church was never officially connected with the state. In fact Hinduism has never been properly organised into a church in the western sense. Being a slow development from ethnical times, the present machinery of discipline is an elaborate system of castes based more on social and family considerations than spiritual. It seems after the expulsion of Buddhism from India about the 8th century A.D. a sort of epicopacy was established. But its function has ever been to safeguard the traditions and ritual laws of Hindusim through the machinary of castes and not to minister to the spiritual wants of the people. Only the Brahmans, especially those who are professional priests, are required to live up to certain religious observances, while the rest of the populations are, beyond the caste rules, free to follow their own forms of customary piety, such as fasts, vows and pilgrimages. The real tyrant who holds them in a hopeless subjection is neither pope, priest, nor book: but that airy, shapeless demon, custom. A priest can be bought off with a little money: a book can be evaded with a little tact. But who can meet the last foe, without the strength of the true religion? Even when the Hindu pope is ready to loosen some of his bonds. the miserable masses hug the old custom all the same, as if under some hypnotic influence!

Christianity and Mahommedanism have visited the land. but only to worse confound the confusion. Where native saints and reformers failed, how can these foreig-

ners, who come more to conquer than to help, how can they prevail spiritually? Hindustan has been twice conquered; but Hinduism still remains waiting for purification, restoration and finally absorption, not in this or that ism of some foreign make, but in the higher synthesis of the religion of mankind growing out of the very soul's native land.

The Brahmo Samaj or The Theistic Church of India is a great and glorious force preparing the ground for this higher synthesis. The founder Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833), of whom it is truly said "whenever he spoke of the Universal Religion he was so much moved that tears came out from his eyes", is the greatest son of modern India. His religion was not merely belief on emotion, but life — life all round. Politics and economics, religious reform and social reform, he alike lived for, worked for and died for. These were the several commandments of his living religion. His very patriotism was a corollary to his Universalism. When the liberties of the people of Naples were crushed by the Austrian troops, he writes in 1821: "I consider the cause of the Neapolitans as my own and their enemies as ours". His last paper in the British Parliament anticipates with a prophetic insight the farthest possibilities of the contact of East and West in India. In him meet the Ancient and Modern, the Oriental and Occidental. He impersonates the great historical process of India's assimilating what is best in modern civilization. The Brahmo Samaj rises as a pillar to his hallowed memory.

The trust deed of the first Brahmo place of worship in Calcutta (Jan. 23, 1830) contains "..... a place of public meeting of all people without distinction, for the worship of the Eternal .... Inscrutable Being, the Author and Preserver of the Universe, but not under any other name peculiarly used for any particular Being or Beings by any man or men whatsoever".

As though to proclaim to the world, that in the Brahmo Samaj, the most uncompromising truth goes

hand in hand with the most unimpeachable fairness and tolerance, another article in the same lays down:

"In conducting the said worship, no object animate or inanimate, that has been recognised as an object of worship by any man or men, shall be reviled or slightingly alluded to, either in preaching, praying or hymns".

As the Brahmo Samaj avoids all formal creeds as well as official clergy, the source of such creeds, I need not say here what things the Samaj believes in and what not. But I may only point out the broad principles of its religious life and progress.

1. **Universalism:** "Raja Ram Mohan Roy is" says Sir Monier Williams, "the first earnest minded investigator of the science of the comparative religion in the world." He deligently studied nearly all the scriptures of the world in their original languages and found the seeds of his universal Religion in all of them. His universalism has been more and more actualized and emphasized by his followers. In 1850 under the venerable auspices of Devendra Nath Thakur, the old theory of the infallibility of the Vedas was unequivocally but respectfully repudiated, while at the same time all the sacred literature of the wide world was accepted as a common divine treasure. About 25 years later, Keshub Chandra Sen in his "New Dispensation" teaching brought out most clearly the fundamental harmony of all the prophets, scriptures and churches of the world. Even now most sympathetic discourses on the lives and works of the founders of the great religions form one of the essential features of the anniversaries of the various local churches of the Samaj This universalism is by some misunderstood as a mere ecclecticism, to the extent of suggesting a certain lack of originality on the part of the Samaj. But even at this risk the Brahmos continue to hold on their communion with the great masters and seek fellowship with their true disciples.

2. **Rationalism** : The above universalism is not a mere sentiment or an indiscriminate attempt at assimila-

tion. A Brahmo never shrinks to exercise his individual reason. He respects the claims as well as accepts the results of modern research in all branches of the study of religion. His science and his religion never conflict with or are indifferent to one another.

3. **Spiritualism**: But the main source and stay of the Brahmo consciousness is spirit and not mind. A Brahmo with all the influence of western rationalism on him is still essentially a mystic in religion, an idealist in thought. Here again was felt by the Samaj the irresistible influence of the personality of Keshub Chundra — who by the inward track dived deeper than the sympathies of a mere critic can dive, rose higher than the conscience of a mere scholar can rise.

4. **Practicalism**: A complete Brahmo is not satisfied with thought and feeling only. He is ever anxious to prove his religion to himself first and to the world afterwards by active work. His pulpit is not a place only for exercising the ecstacies of soul, much less for spinning out theories about the Unseen, but an open and active platform for all manner of social reform, which is at present the primary need of India.

THE METHODS

5. **No Compromise**: Attempts are now and then made by their well-meaning friends to make the Brahmos believe that their difficulties will be minimized and success assured only if they be less candid in expressing their views and more compromising with what are confessedly mere conventions of the orthodoxy. But as the Brahmo Samaj is called from above to disengage the essence of religion from the thick grown crust of an idolatrous ceremonialism. it has to calmly and courageously cope with all sorts of smooth-faced sophistry. Even the charge of denationalising their country is often hurled against the Brahmos. And yet in the name of truth and the higher interests, they have to be strict and exacting in their radicalism. Many a protestant community in India such

as Jains, Lingayets and Sikhs, who were vigorous at first in their protest against the orthodoxy, are now almost merged in the same — not that they were not liberal enough at the outset, but that they failed to conserve the forces of their liberalism into a life of progress. The Brahmo Samaj is alive to this great lesson.

6. **No Dogma :** If a Brahmo is thus so uncompromising towards orthodoxy, in his own faith he is throughly undogmatic. It is his experience that for the religious life and growth, no dogma is necessary, whether positive or negative. He is fully aware of the fact that dogmatic science which leads to over-negation is as much a bar to religion as dogmatic theology which leads to over-assertion. He, therefore, stands at the gate of the Unseen, like a child half-afraid at the edge of a tragic cragg, with trancendal wonder and mystic joy too great for words!

7. **No Sect :** As in the faith so in the Church the doors are always open. If anybody feels any scruples to step inside, he has himself to thank.

WORK

There are more than a hundred churches all over India. Weekly divine services are conducted by the leading laymen of the congregations. There are no professional ministers as such. There is a central institution at Calcutta for training missionaries. Laymen also take a great part in the propagation of the cause. Abolition of the caste-system and of the custom of early marriage, promotion of female education and widow-remarriage reform and many other domestic and social reforms are carried out as far as possible in the Brahmo community and enthusiastically advocated outside.

From the beginning the Brahmos are in very sympathetic relations with the Unitarians of England and America. In recent years the British and Foreign Unitarian Association of London is greatly furthering the cause of Liberal Religion and International amity by inviting Brahmo students to the Manchester College,

Oxford, and sending out their representatives to work with the Brahmos in India.

THE ARYA SAMAJA

Is the second great theistic movement in India. It was started in 1875 by Swamy Dayanand (1824-1883), a Brahman monk of a very powerful personality and great Sanskrit learning. He is the Luther of Modern India. He held trenchant controversies with renowned orthodox Pandits and ruthlessly refused the authority of all the Hindu scriptures, except the original four Vedas, on which he exclusively based all his teachings about the one spiritual Godhead. He insisted on one particular school of the Vedic interpretation, viz., of Jaska (about 500 B.C.) as the true one, and fearlessly exposed the later corruptions of Hindusim. Although the Aryas, by which name the followers of Dayanand call themselves, still adhere to the infallibility of the Vedas, they so ingeniously interpret the texts as to bring them into complete harmony with modern thought, which is virtually a more dominating element in their faith than the texts. In condemning idolatry, maintainting the purity of the doctrine of the Godhead and promoting social reform in all its aspects, the Aryas are as strong and sincere as the Brahoms. Nay in spite of their somewhat exelusive regard for the Vedas, the enthusiasm of the Arayas many times glows almost to the white heat of the Universal Religion, as is manifest in the words of one of their exponents, Lala Ralla Ram — "The Christianity as embodiod in the high ideals of the Christ, but not the Christianity of the church dogmas, it (Arya Samaj) claims as its own; the Islam — not of fire and sword but of peace and goodwill to true believers and of the submission to the will of God, it recognises as really its own truth .... the personal purity, the resignation and the ethical loftiness of Buddhism are indeed its inherited treasures. The Arya Samaj accordingly preaches the **Dharma** of Universal Brotherhood and Fatherhood of God."

Even in their peculiar attitude to the Vedas, the Aryas do a great service. viz.. of drawing the national attention to a fresh and thorough going study of the long neglected ancient scriptures. During the short period of 25 years, they have made a marvellous progress in thought, organisation and propagation. There are at present about 250 Samajas or congregations and two big institutions, where they educate their youths and train their missionaries. They make converts even from Christianity and Islam.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Is the third great force. Although this movemeut first arose in America, it drew its inspiration from the mysterious East and has now settled its headquarters in India. Its dogmatism and occultism apart, it has a largely liberalising influence of its own. According to its professed objects (1) "to form a nucleus of the Universal brotherhood, and (2) to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science", one sees in its folds in India the motley gatherings of Hindus, Buddhists, Mahommedans, Parsees and Christians together. That these several initiates — and they are numerous and fast increasing — can still keep up their old connections, is a boast of the Society and a puzzle to outsiders. But still in as much as the work of the Society brings about real spiritual reawakening, religious toleration and mutual understanding between the various sections of humanity. it must be welcome of all friends of progress. Although the Society's methods are doubtful, as it dabbles too much in the dry bones of orthodoxy and ventures too far or too easily on the forbidden regions of the Unseen, yet the motive of the leaders, Mrs. Annie Besant and Col. Alcott are beyond suspicion; while their practical and earnest efforts to uplift the fallen people by such means as the Central Hindu College at Banaras and the Poor Pariah Schools at Madras will command respect from all quarters.

In the last less than 20 years there have grown up 222 theosophical centres in India, among 714 in the whole world.

All three of these forces are in origin independent and in fellowship quite apart from each other. Of these Brahmo Samaj, I think, most fully represents the Liberal Religion as understood by this council; while the other two also are with us, in as much as they are not against us. In time to come we shall all be conscious of the larger unity of which we are at present unconscious.

Meanwhile, permit me to express my faith, that the Brahmo Samaj, if organized efficiently enough, will offer basis for the operation of a wider movement in the East., i.e., of fellowship between the liberal Buddhists of Japan, Burma, Sayam and Ceylon on the one hand and the liberal Mahommedans of India and the Babis of Persia on the other. Even now these several liberal religious movements are working in their own isolated ways in Asia — nay perhaps are groping their way to a coming union. In the realization of that great dream, if ever we wish it, East and West, shall have to co-operate. In vain has orthodox Christianity so long battled against other religions as orthodox and as obstinate. But hence forward Liberal Christianity will stimulate and co-work with other indigenous liberal movements. The future struggle is going to be not between two or more existing isms, but between warm and palpitating life on one hand and the cold fossils of all mere isms on the other. The present council, let us trust, is no small sign of the coming millennium!

Chapter IV

IN THE SERVICE OF THE DEPRESSED

The principles of Liberal Religion, viz., brotherhood of human beings and social justice found their most concrete expression in V. R. Shinde's Depressed Classes Mission Society of India founded in 1906.

It is necessary to note in this context that Shinde's concern for the welfare of the untouchables may be traced to his childhood. The stories of the saints particularly of Ekanatha and Chokhamela, created in his mind feelings of compassion and respect for the untouchables. But these feelings were vague and dormant. Later on during his college days, Shinde was very much impressed by the efforts of Ramchandra Krishna Kalaskar towards spreading education among the untouchables. Shinde felt that this example should be followed.[1]

Further, he was greatly benefited by observing the Domestic Mission's Multipurpose work in England. It was here, that Shinde saw how the Missionaries worked for the welfare of the poverty-stricken lower classes by opening cradle-houses for the children of the working mothers, by nursing the sick, and by rendering spiritual service not only to the able bodied ones but also to the bed-ridden old men and women individually. The standard of cleanliness and decency in the houses of the lower-class poor families appealed to Shinde the most, and he wished that this kind of neatness and decency can be introduced in the house of the untouchables in India.[2]

In 1905, Shinde came to know about some organizations of the untouchables themselves, striving to improve their conditions. Of these, **Somavamshiya Samaj** founded by Shivaram Janaba Kamble at Poona, The **Mohapa Low**

Caste Association founded by **Kisan Fagu** at Nagpur, and the **Somavamshiya Hitchintaka Mandali** founded by Shripatrao Thorat and Pandoba Dangle at Nagar, were important. Shinde, on reading their reports and attending some of their meetings, was convinced that these people had enough life and vitality to raise themselves up. Particularly their assurance that they would like to achieve progress without coming in the way of other communities won Shinde's respect for them.[3]

Shinde was aware of the efforts made by individuals of upper castes in different times and different parts of the country such as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule from Maharashtra between 1850 to 1890, Baba Shashipad Bandopadhyaya from Bengal between 1865 to 1872, and Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda from 1882 onwards. In 1891, Prarthana Samaj had started schools for untouchables. All such efforts were not only short-lived but aimed at a limited and partial improvement of the conditions of the untouchables. Shinde began to think of organizing an association with the objective of achieving total comprehensive welfare of these down-trodden people not only of the untouchable but of all the lower classes.

With this idea in his mind, Shinde delivered lectures and issued pamphlets. In his pamphlet of December, 1905, Shinde rightly pointed out that, "If these efforts of philanthrophy and self-help started by the various associations and individuals continue to work in isolation, they will soon fade out due to mere exahustion".[4] In August, 1906, he insisted that, "An indigenous Mission for undertaking the work of socio-religious elevation of untouchables must be organised, and that the Prarthana Samaj, as it was the only Liberal Religious body in the Bombay Province, should take the initiative in organizing this noble Mission."[5]

Dr. Santuji Ramji Lad, a devout follower of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule and the Satya Shodhak Samaj, helped Shinde in persuading Seth Damodardas Sukhadwala to make a grant of Rs. 1,000 for starting the Depressed Classes Mission of India which came into existence on 18th October, 1906.[6] The first Managing Committee con-

sisted of Justice N. G. Chandavarkar as the President, Sheth Sukadwala as the Vice-President, N. B. Pandit as the Treasurer, Santuji Lad as the Superintendent, and V. R. Shinde as the Honorary Secretary. Chandavarkar's conviction that "in elevating the untouchables we are but elevating ourselves" remained the guiding principle for the working of the Depressed Classes Mssion.

I

The Condition of the Untouchables in Western India

Since very ancient times, untouchables (Antyajas) were shorn of political power; they were socially outcaste, economically impoverished and culturally degraded. In western India, untouchables consisted of mainly Chambhars, Mahars, Mangs, Dhors and Bhangis. Though the untouchables were included in Hindu society as Hindus, they were treated as ex-communicated. Untouchability was practised by caste-Hindus towards them for generations together since ancient times, with the result that the causes for their ex-communication were almost relegated to oblivion.[7] Untouchability was practised not only by caste-Hindus towards them, but also by untouchables themselves towards one another in hierarchical order in which Chambhars topped the list and Mahars, Mangs, Dhors and Bhangis formed the lower strata one below the other respectively. Even among each one of them, there were separate sub-castes between whom marriage and inter-dining were prohibited.[8] Chambhars, Mahars, Mangs and Dhors were the inhabitants of western Maharashtra, while Bhangis were immigrants from Rajputana and Punjab.[9] The untouchables were required to live outside the village or town and they formed caste-wise colonies separate from one another. All of them were deprived of the civic amenities enjoyed by the caste-Hindus. They were prohibited from participating in public gatherings, drawing water from public wells, or using good clothing or metal wares. Their children were not allowed to attend the village school. They got their livelihood from collecting **Baluta** from the village-peasantry, had a privilege of collecting their clothing from the

shrouds of dead bodies, and carrying away dead animals whose skins, bones and flesh was to be their proud possession.[10] The caste-society condemned them with contempt and scorn for their uncleanliness, ignorance, nasty food, dirty clothing and lowly life.

The Depressed Classes were doing their age-old traditional professions. The Chambhars had somewhat profitable craft of leatherwork, the Mangs were the masters of rope-making. However, with the advent of industrial revolution, leather industry was appropriated by Muslims from Madras and Boharis from Bombay, and Chambhars were reduced to mere labourers in leather industry.[11] The Mangs too lost their monopoly of rope-making to the Europen manufaturers. Mangs were thus deprived not only of their livelihood but even of their social standing, and were stamped as 'criminal tribes'.[12] The Dhors working at the lowest ladder of the leather-industry, viz., that of working on raw-hide, became mere labourers bound down to the work, due to the lack of freedom of changing their profession. The Mahars, who were previously enlisted as traditional guards of village in village administration and worked in armies of Muslim rulers and Marathas, were given a piece of land in lieu of their service known as Mahar Vatan. The entire community of the Mahars in the village was required to be present to render free and compulsory service of all possible kind to the government officers and village bureaucracy.[13] The increase in population aggravated their poverty. However, with the advent of British regime, many of the untouchables gradually started evacuating to the new centres of work started by railway construction, public works and factories. In the newly rising industrial cities the untouchables found remunerative employment in municipalities, mills, docks and railways. They were, to some extent, set free from the sharp contempt and enfeebling slavery which victimised them in rural areas. Europeans did not observe untouchability and freely employed untouchables as butlers and servants as they were found to be cheaper labour and easily pliable servants.

The attitude of the Imperialist British Government towards the untouchables was in keeping with their colonial policy. In 18th and 19th centuries, the British officers of the East India Company made full use of the valour of the Mahars and Pariahs, whom they attracted to the military service of the British company by offering regular payment, good treatment and necessary facilities. The British officers did not observe untouchability. They imparted primary education to the untouchable servants and to their children, and gave facilities for establishing their colonies. They commemorated names of the **antyaja** heroes on Victory-Gates and Victory-Pillars.[14] However, all this was to change soon after the British conquest of India was completed.

When the work of consolidation of administration was started, Mount Stuart Elphinstone, the Governor of Bombay (1819-1827), showed favour for old traditions and the higher castes. He despised the untouchables and closed the doors of education and civil service against them. In unambiguous words he says:

> The Missionaries find the lowest castes best pupils, but we must be careful how we offer any special encouragement to men of that description. They are not only the most despised but the least numerous. If our system of education first took root among them, it would never spread further and we might find ourselves at the head of a class superior to the rest in useful knowledge but hated and despised by the other castes.[15]

However, their recruitment in the army was continued. They fought very valiantly to help the British Company in suppressing the Revolt of 1857, and showed great valour in Afghan Wars. But by 1892, the recruitment of untouchables in the army was stopped by Lord Kitchener on the principle of reorganising the Imperial Army only with high-born martial races.[16] By this time, in all 233 untouchables had occupied the higher posts such as that of Jamadar, Subhedar and even that of Sardar Bahadur.[17] The wisdom of the policy of Lord

Kitchener was questioned by the **Times of India** that lamented the loss of expect Dhooly-bearer service rendered by untouchables. In 1895, as against this decision of the British government, Havaldar Gopalnak Vitthalnak Valangkar, a Mahar pensioner from the army decided to send a representation to the Government in consultation with Mahatma Phule, Justice Ranade and Baba Padamanji. However, the untouchables were so demoralised with fear that many of the pensioners refused to sign the document.[18] It is really interesting to note that the elevation and the later suppression done by the British did not go waste. It created an urge for self-help among the new generations of the untouchables. In 1904, Shivaram Janaba Kamble, a Mahar from Poona, made efforts to organize the untouchables together in **'Shree Shankar Prasadik Somavamshiya Hitachintak Mitra Samaj.** Similar work was started in Ahmednagar and Nagpur by Shripatrao Thorat and Kisan Faggu founding **'Somavanshiya Hitchintak Mandali** at Nagar, and **'Mohapa Low Caste Association'** at Nagpur respectively. Shivaram Janaba Kamble convened the first conference of the untouchables at Saswad in 1904. It was attended by Mahars from 51 villages.[19] On 20 November, 1904, Kamble sent a petition to the Governor of Bombay. The petition contained the following demands:- (i) that the untouchables be admitted freely to the lower grade of the public service, (ii) that the restrictions against the attendance of their children at public schools should be removed, (iii) that they should be permitted to join the police department, and (iv) that they should be given opportunity to get enlisted in the Indian army.[20] To these first two demands the Collector of Poona gave evasive reply. To the third demand, the Collector clearly said that "objection of the other members of the police force to associate them with untouchables cannot in the general interest be disregarded. Caste-prejudices render it difficult to place them (untouchables) in authority over higher castes". As for the fourth demand, viz., that of recruitment in the Indian army, it was stated that the matter was not under the purview of the Bombay Govern-

ment.[21] So another petition was sent to the Governor-General of India in 1905, to which the Governor-General of India expressed his inability to interfere.[22] Thus, all these efforts to improve the condition of Hindu untouchables did not bear much fruit.

The centres of christian missionary activities established at Ahmednagar, Poona, Junnar, Harnai, Bankot, Satara and Shirur between 1840-60, were providing the facilities of schools, boardings and hospitals to the people from the lower castes with a view of converting them. In course of time, the untouchable students who accepted Christianity prospered as magistrates, professors, pleaders, doctors and priests, and obtained opportunities to make their fortune in Government service. The Act of giving benefit of inheritance to converts was passed by Lord Bentinck in 1834. It was made applicable in the Bombay Presidency in 1850. Not only the Government, but even the higher caste Hindues did not feel it below their dignity to shake hands with these untouchables converted to Christianity, and welcomed them to their houses.[23] On the other hand, untouchables like S. J. Kamble, who earnestly desired to live as an upper caste Hindu were denied all opportunities and liberties to improve their lot both by the caste Hindus and Government, and other religionists as, Muslims, Parsis, etc.

Consequently, these encouragements and suppressions, the humiliations and irritations that the untouchables were facing were not in vain. They created a generation of youths, who grew impatient over their ill-treatment and insults and started making efforts for their uplift in one form or the other.

II

When V. R. Shinde founded the 'Depressed Classes Mission Society of India' in 1906, he decided to co-ordinate the efforts of the untouchables, the caste-Hindus, British officers and others for the uplift of the untouchables and to bring them together in the programme of the 'Depressed Classes Mission Society of India'. Shinde very well understood that mere education and employment

which the untouchables urgently sought were not going to save the community from depression and degradation. The total abolition of untouchability at all levels personal, social and national level, was the only remedy for removing the degradation and the depression of the untouchables.[24] Shinde understood that this work should be taken up in the spirit of a religious mission and not in a patronising manner. He insisted that this work should be initiated in the big cities like Bombay, where industrialisation was introducing a new culture. In the second stage of the work, it should be spread to rural areas. He very emphatically asserted that if the effort for the abolition of untouchability was to be effective it must be organised on the basis of willing and close co-operation of all the sections in the urban population viz., the British officers, the caste-Hindus and the untouchables.

Shinde started his work very systematically. He undertook research to find out the origin of untouchability, and its dimension and adverse effects, not only on the untouchables but also on the future of the country in general. Here is the summary of Shinde's view on this issue which he stated in his article 'Bahishkrit Bharat'.[25]:

> Untouchability needs to be abolished from the view point of social, religious, humanitarian, moral, political, national and selfish considerations. The untouchables of today were not untouchables originally. It seems that ex-communication was inflicted on men from the caste-society due to various reasons as **pratiloma** marriage between Brahman female and Shudra male (who was not an untouchable), blasphemy, political conquest, adultery, treachery, lowly profession, etc. The Mahars and Bhangis have many things in common with the Marathas and Rajputs respectively. The ex-communication on the succeeding generations, in fact, should have been lifted up after a certain period in accordance with the orders of the scriptures, but it remained unlifted due to inactivity on the part of the leaders of the caste-

society. The untouchables are a part of the Hindu society as the service rendered by them is accepted by Hindus; yet they are kept unjustly cutside the pale of the Hindu society. In no country or society such servants are excluded from the society. The government levies taxes on both of them but while granting benefits of civic life to caste Hindus, does injustice to the untouchables by excluding them from the benefits of civic life. Christian Missionaries are elevating them to social status by converting them to Christianity, and surprisingly enough such people are welcome to the house of caste-Hindus and in government as well. Hindus of caste-society form 15 crores of the population, untouchables 5½ crores, Muslims 6 crores and Christians 30 lakhs. If the Hindus keep themselves disinterested in the problem of untouchables and the earnest Missionaries continue their work of conversion, the Christian population will thus grow to 5½ crores + 30 lakhs = 7 crores. The Christian population will add a third rival in the arena of political rivalry which at presents exists between Hindus and Muslims. From the view point of the well-being of the nation, it is essential that 5½ crores of untouchables should be elevated in their social status and be accepted inseparably in the Hindu society.

Depressed Classes Mission Society of India

The aim of V. R. Shinde in the organisation of Depressed Classes Mission Society of India was the total abolition of untouchability. The means for achieving this objective were mainly abolition of caste distinction on the basis of liberal religion and association of all these groups to extirpate the institution of untouchability.[26] Under the auspices of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India, Shinde founded boardings, schools, free hospitals and Bhajan Samajas, in which the members of the caste society and untouchables were associated together with the view of removing the prejudices towards one another by helping the backward children from De-

pressed Classes to follow good habits of the advanced classes. This association was started from the top-level. The teachers and the workers of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India were required to stay in the Mission Compound which was at the centre of the colonies of untouchables.[27] In Bombay, the family of V. R. Shinde consisting of his parents—Ramajibaba, and Yamunabai, his sisters—Janakka and Tanyakka, his wife Rukminibai, and his children, lived permanently in the 'Nirashrit Seva Sadan' of the Mission, and all of them associated themselves with the work of the Mission in one way or the other, Ramajibaba maintained the accounts, Yamunabai stitched clothes from the worn-out clothes, collected in charity from other people, Janakka and Rukminibai rendered all kinds of service and help to untouchable women even to the extent of giving bath to the untouchable children. Saiyad Abdul Kadar, a Muslim friend and Missionary of D. C. Mission, along with his wife Kalyanibai, dedicated his life to the Mission. Shree V. S. Sohoni, a Brahman Prarthana Samajist teacher in Wilson High School, left his job to work as the rector of the 'Nirashrit Seva Sadan', and brought his family to stay in the colony of the untouchables near the Globe Mill at Parel. The Boarding of the untouchables admitted one-fourth of the students from the upper castes with the view that the students from the Depressed Classes should be benefitted by following their example in their habits of study and behaviour.[28] Such of the untouchable students who could not be enrolled in the boarding were attracted to spend much of their time in the boarding which became a centre of training in cultural activities such as personal hygiene, moral training and religious service (Upasana). The Mission's hostel took notice of the prejudices of the Mahars, Mangs and Chambhars against each other and made systematic effort to remove them. When Shivaram Janaba Kamble, a Mahar leader thought of honouring Sayajirao Maharaj, on behalf of Mahar Community, at the time of prize distribution ceremony of the Depressed Classes Missicn Society of India, Shinde discouraged this separatist tendency and persuad-

ed him to organise the programme as a function of the Depressed Classes and not as of Mahars only.[29]

The medical service of the Depressed Classes Mission of India dispensed medicine to the people of the untouchable castes as well as other castes together, in the dispensaries of the Mission. The Missionaries and the workers visited the houses of the untouchables for conducting maternity deliveries, for nursing the sick, and for giving religious service such as recitation of puranas of Bhagavata Dharma, through which they propagated principles of Liberal Religion.[30] In this work, Shinde involved mainly women from higher society—both Indian and European—to set an example to other classes of the society. The Ladies' Committee consisted of Lady Muir Mackenzie (wife of Sir John Muir Mackenzie), Lady Laxmibai Chandavarkar (wife of Justice N. G. Chandavarkar), Laxmibai Ranade (sister-in-law of Justice Ranade), Mrs. Stanley Reed (wife of Sir Stanley Reed, Editor of the Times of India), and Smt. Seetabai Sukhtankar (wife of Vasudevrao Sukhtankar and daughter of Rev. Bishop of Domestic Mission at Manchester).[31] Shinde celebrated prize distribution ceremonies and held conferences and anniversaries of the Mission with great pomp to attract the attention of the people to the Mission's work, and involved in such celebrations prominent men from various communities like R. P. Paranjpe (a Liberal), Ismail (a Muslim leader), N. C. Kelkar (a close associate and follower of Lokmanya Tilak), Prof. Dharmananda Kosambi (a great scholar), Prof. D. K. Karve (a social worker), Harke (an agent of Shankaracharya of Hampi), Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda (a reformist ruler), district collectors, education officers and judges. They all stressed the urgent need of abolishing untouchability in their speeches. The funds such as rice fund, cloth fund and Rupee fund were raised by Shinde with a view to collecting not merely articles and money but also sympathy of the masses, right from poor house-wife who could contribute a handful of rice, to a worker or middle-class clerk who could contribute a rupee. Shinde was keen on creating public opinion in favour of removing

untouchability as well as obtaining financial aid.[32] In Bombay particularly, the Mission was successful in making a grand beginning of the work that won admiration of the classes and the masses as well.

Shinde aimed at an all-round elevation of the untouchables in educational, social economic and cultural matters. In education he stressed the importance of the training in some craft along with literary education. The Mission schools imparted training in carpentary, painting, drawing, book-binding, leather-work and weaving. This, Shinde said, was for training the hands and eyes of the students for the technical work, and also for solving the problem of their employment and making them self-sufficient.[33] For the cultural development of untouchables, Shinde conducted moral training classes, weekly Divine services and daily prayer for the students, while Bhajan Samajas, Keertans and Divine service were conducted for the grown-ups. The religious congregations at Thungaon, Bombay, Poona, Satara and Kolhapur were very well managed. In 1908 when Shinde got the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India recognised as a member of the 'All India Theistic Conference', the position of the Depressed Classes in the religious world showed improvement.[34]

For making a forceful attempt to revive the recruitment of untouchables in the army, Shinde helped Shivaram Janaba Kamble to send a petition to the Secretary of State for India in November, 1910, and the copies of the petition were sent to prominent members of the Parliament, of the India office, of the Viceroy's Council, and to important news papers in England, Germany, America, Japan and India. The petition referred to the equality of treatment promised by the Queen's Proclamation to all. It narrated a short account as to how Mahar soldiers and officers rendered valuable service to the British and demanded that a separate batallion of the Mahars should be raised for recruiting them on the basis of caste that was then prevalent. But this petition could not win much success at that time.[35]

Discussion groups and lectures enlightened the male population intellectually. For the benefit of the women from the lower classes, the Mission opened 'Nirashrit Seva Sadan', Mahila Samaj, tailoring classes and literary classes were started to help the intellectual and economic betterment of women. Women were instructed in housekeeping, nursing, health and hygiene, and care of children. The destitute women and children were given shelter in the 'Nirashrit Sadan', Efforts were made for abolishing evil practices such as dedicating girls to the temples. Girls were admitted in the Mission's hostels and their education was encouraged.[36]

Shinde made a very well planned effort to involve the British officers in the work of the Depressed Classes Mission. Many of them felt sympathy for the downtrodden Mahars and with their liberal spirit they were keen on their elevation. For instance, in 1902, in an appeal case. Mr. Lamb, the District Magistrate of Ahmednagar, exonerated Walod Govindya Mukindya, a Mahar, from the guilt of polluting water of a well by drawing water from it, for which Walod Govindya had been fined by B. H. Godbole, Second Class Magistrate at Jamkhed.[37] In the work of the Depressed Classes Mission, Shinde won the sympathy of Sir Munir Mackenzie—an Indian Civil Service Officer, Stanley Reed—the editor of the Times of India, Mr. W. T. Morrison—the Commissioner of Central Division, Principal F. G. Selby of the Deccan College, Prof. Woodehouse of Deccan College, Commander Major Alderson, Captain H. C. Steeve, and Dr. Harold H. Mann—Principal of Agricultural College in Poona. Sir George Clarke, the then acting Governor of Bombay, was cauticusly approached for help, and he gave a pleasant surprise to the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India by allowing his own daughter, Miss Violet Clarke to present a music programme in aid of the Mission.[38] Having heard the activities of the Mission the Governor General and his wife Lord and Lady Hardinge sent a donation of Rs. 2,000|-.[39]

By 1912, the Mission's activities were multiplied. As referred to in the previous Chapter, the Mission was sepa-

rated from Prarthana Samaj. The Trust-deed of the Mission, and the Mission as a charitable body, were registered independently in 1910. The Mission had, by 1912, spread its work in the provinces of Bombay, Madras and Central Province. The constitution was so prepared that the Mission could get the Branches attached to it in variety of ways, as incorporated branch, affiliated branch or associated branch. The Mother institution was founded in Bombay. The incorporated branches were organised at Poona and Hubli. The affiliated branches worked at Satara, Mahabaleshwar, Thane, Dapoli, Mangalore, Madras, Akola, Amaravati, Indore and Bhavanagar. Miss Clarke Boarding House at Kolhapur was an associated branch. Shinde moved from town to town for conducting the organised efforts in some form or the other guiding the activities, holding propaganda meetings and collecting funds.

Shinde's efforts thrived richly due to the wholehearted active support of Sayyad Abdul Kadar, Vamanrao Sadashiv Sohoni, A. K. Mudliyar, D. N. Patwardhan, Janakka Shinde, Rukminibai Shinde, Laxmibai Ranade, Shivaram Janaba Kamble, Harold H. Mann, P. B. Gothaskar and L. B. Nayak from Prarthana Samaj, and K. Rangrao of Mangalore. Shinde gave impetus to the Brahmo Samaj workers in Bengal to organise a Depressed Classes Mission in Bengal for the benefit of Namshudras. The Mission was started in 1909.[40]

The propaganda work and the intensive organising activity reached its culmination in the **'Maharashtra Parishad'** that was held at Poona in 1912. The Parishad was attended by great thinkers of the age as Shri Mahabhagavat — the future Shankaracharya, Prof. Laxman Shastri Lele, Ganesh Akkaji Gavai—a Mahar leader, B. S. Kamat, Gopalrao Devdhar, Natha Maharaj—a Bhangi leader, Prof. G. C. Bhate, Haribhau Limaye and Bhaskarrao Jadhav, who spoke on various aspects of progress of untouchables such as industrial training, residential schools, the need of preacher propagandists for the Mission, Universal education, representation of untouchables in the Municipalities, recruitment of untouchables in the

Government service, the need of combined efforts.[41] etc. The Conference had a women's section which was attended by 200 women from depressed classes and 50 women from caste society and was presided over by Ramabai Ranade. The women from depressed classes not only delivered speeches and read papers on their problems, but also joined in cooking food for the community dinner when the cooks struck work to stop Brahmans from joining the community dinner.[42] At that time the Parishad achieved its goal in collecting the building fund for Poona branch; Tukojirao Maharaj donated an amount of Rs. 20,000[43] and the Poona Municipality gave 7 acres of land at Bhokarvadi on nominal rent of Rs. 2|-[44] per annum.

The most splendid success of all, won by V. R. Shinde's Mission was the change in the governmental policy towards the untouchables. In response to the deputation of the Mission to the Governor of Bombay, Sir George Clarke in 1910, the Governor's Council passed a resolution directing the Government officers and the municipalities for increasing educational facilities to the students from Depressed Classes.[45] Moreover, Sir George Clarke in the prize distribution ceremoney of the Depressed Classes Mission Society in 1910, took cognisance of the work of the mission in elevating the untouchables, and in arousing the sympathy of the caste-Hindus towards them. In view of the changed conditions in the society, Sir George Clarke declared official disavowal of the policy of discrimination initiated by Mount Stuart Elphinstone.[46] The deputation that was sent in 1913 to the Governor of Bombay, Lord Willingdon, was successful in getting a grant of Rs. 20,000 to the building fund of 'Ahalyashram' of Poona branch, a special grant to its industrial training classes, a grant of half the expenditure of its educational institutions, and an extra-ordinary grant of Rs. 2,000 to its hostels.[47] In 1913, Shinde persuaded the Governor of Bombay to reconsider the policy of the Government towards the Mangs who suffered disabilities due to their having been stamped as a criminal tribe. Lord Willington showed readiness to

establish a separate colony of Mangs in which they would flourish as an agricultural community.[48] After the war was over this policy was extended to many other criminal tribes as well, and Shinde was requested by the government to take charge of such colonies in 1923.[49]

By 1916, the Central Government as well, showed intrest in the elevation of the untouchables. The Central Government admitted the resolution of uplift of untouchables presented by Dadibhoy of Nagpur in the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi on 15th March 1916. Shinde, by now a recognised authority on the problem of untouchables, was requested to send his recommendations as to what measures the Central Government should adopt for the improvement of untouchables. Shinde sent his report and recommendations to the Government of India,[50] and these were afterwards published in the form of a booklet, "Views and Suggestions to the Government of India". Shinde recommended that the government should require private and government schools to grant admission to the untouchable students without any restriction so that they would get education of the same standard as that of the students from caste-society. Hostels for untouchables|students to train them in a culture of higher order should be opened; large number of scholarships should be made available to the students from untouchable classes, taking education in training colleges and other higher education institutions, and the scholarships should be properly notified. In addition to Industrial training, provision should be made for getting them employed as apprentices in factories; their recruitment in the army should be again started. However, these recommendations could not materialise at that time as Dadibhoy was required to withdraw his resolution because Surendranath Banerjee and Pandit Malaviya opposed the Government as unduly interfering with the domestic problem of Hindu society. They considered the problem of untouchables as a socio-religious problem, and insisted that it should be solved by Hindus themselves.[51]

During the first World War, Shinde pressed again the demand for the recruitment of untouchables conti-

nuously and repeated it again, when Lord Willingdon, the Governor of Bombay, attended the prize distribution ceremony of the Depressed Classes Mission Society on 30th June 1916. Though Lord Willingdon avoided giving any definite answer at that time, a year later in 1917, the British Government opened the doors of its army to the untouchables. To thank the Government for its decision, a mammoth meeting was held in the Town Hall at Bombay, on 8th June 1917, and Shivaram J. Kamble, V. R. Shinde and many others expressed their gratitude towards the Government.[52] Though the Government at first aimed only at recruiting Mahars in the auxiliary service, soon the 111-B Battallion of Mahars was formed in two companies and the Bombay Government was required to supply 3,390 Mahars every month.[53]

Thus, by the end of 1916, Shinde's campaign for the abolition of untouchability spread in the three provinces of Bombay, Madhya Pradesh and Madras. The big cities, such as Bombay, Poona, Hubli, Nagpur, and Bangalore became the centres of this activity which blossomed in the form of hostels, schools, technical institutions and cultural associations for the depressed classes; they transmitted their spirit to the district towns which in their turn were expected to filter it down to the villages. Severity of untouchability in public life, educational field and employment was considerably reduced in urban areas. The War compelled the British Government to start recruitment of the army from the untouchable classes. However, this change in the policy that took place—both on public and governmental level—was smooth in case of those who held liberal religious views, while the orthodox were surrendering their orthodoxy in public life not due to change in their views but due to irresistible change in economic conditions and international relations.

III

Shinde emphasized the fact that untouchables were an inseparable part of the Indian society. He persistently explained the adverse impact of their exclusion from caste Hindu society on the political future of the country. But

neither the Moderates nor the Extremists paid heed to his entreaties. For almost 10 years since the inception of the Depressed Classes Mission Society Shinde organised the 'Conference of The Depressed Classes along with the sessions of the Indian National Congress, and requested the prominent leaders of the Congress, to take up the problem of untouchability as a national problem; but all of them brushed it aside as a socio-religious problem unconnected with politics.[54] In spite of this disappointment, Shinde urged the untouchables to cultivate the spirit of patriotism in them. During his training in the Manchester College, he had been much impressed to see how the Unitarians in spite of their difference with others, joined wholeheartedly with others in resolving national problems.[55] Shinde followed the same policy in moulding the attitude of the untouchables. In 1916, when the National Congress signed the Lucknow pact with the Muslim League, and decided to make united effort for demanding "Swaraj" for India, Shinde made sincere efforts to win the support of the untouchables to this demand. At the same time, to look after the political interests of the untouchables, Shinde founded the 'All India Untouchability League' in 1917. However, he kept this League independent and did not allow it to be dominated by any political party.

In the meanwhile, the Home-Rule movement aroused the fears of the non-Brahmans including untouchables, that if the ruling power passed in to the hands of the Congress led by Brahmans, it would be nothing else than the revival of the previous slavery and misery for them. The non-Brahman leaders Kothari, Annasaheb Latthe, Bhaskarrao Jadhav and others organised **"The Deccan Rayat Sabha"**, and also started the weekly **'Jagruk'** for protecting the political interests of the non-Brahmans and untouchables.[56] V. R. Kothari soon won over Shivrama Janaba Kamble, the President of **Somavamshiya Mitra Samaj** to the **Deccan Rayat Sabha.** When Edwin S. Montagu, the newly appointed Secretary of State for India, made the famous Declaration of the policy of 'gradual development of self-governing institutions with

a view to progressive relisation of responsible Government in India as an intergral part of the British Empire, on 20th August, 1917, a very sharp reaction of protest against this Declaration was expressed by the untouchables in South India, Bengal and Maharashtra as well.

Lokmanya Tilak tried to smoothen the situation by declaring that he would not mind even if the Councils had only the non-Brahman members, but that he was keen that there was no preponderance of foreigners or nominated members. Further he added that it was mainly because of the educational qualifications that Brahmans were in majority in the Councils and Government service. Tilak opposed the principle of communal representation, which would bring uneducated representatives of uneducated castes in the Council. He said, it would prove an 'impractical arrangement'.[57] Shinde agreed with these views of Tilak entirely because, under the influence of Unitarians he too was convinced of the need of well-qualified representatives to represent the electorate,[58] and of the leadership of the intelligentsia in political field. This agreement of Shinde with the Extremists drew protests from the Mahars who did not send their representatives to participate in the mammoth meeting of the 'Rashtriya Maratha Sangha' organised by V. R. Shinde at Poona on 8th November, 1917. In the meeting held at Madanpura under the auspices of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India and presided by N. G. Chandavarkar, opposition was expressed by a Mahar youth G. A. Gawai to the idea of transfer of power from the British to the representatives of high-caste Hindus. Gawai said that it would result into nothing else but revival of slavery for the scheduled castes.[59] The resolution was passed for demanding separate representation for untouchables in the legislative council. N. G. Chandavarkar, the Chairman of the meeting, supported the above demand and led the deputation of untouchables for in interview with Montagu in December, 1917. Thus, in the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India, difference between Chandavarkar and V. R. Shinde started appearing by the end of December, 1917. In a

meeting organised by non-Brahmans under the presidentship of Shri Bagade, the Government was requested to grant separate representation to the scheduled castes. A severe struggle ensued between the non-Brahmans, who solicited the help of the Government for safeguarding their interests against the Brahman-dominated Congress, and the Nationalists who were combating against British Government and against the non-Brahmans. The Nationalists made effort for maintaining national unity, and did not wish to give separate representation to any other community except Muslims. Shinde remained firm in his support to the Nationalists, and was rewarded when the National Congress of December, 1917, held under the presidentship of Annie Besant, passed the resolution of putting end to the disabilities inflicted on the untouchables.[60] The Resolution, "This Congress urges upon the people of India the necessity, justice, and righteousness of removing all disabilities imposed by custom upon the depressed classes, the disabilities being of a most vexatious and oppressive character, subjecting those classes to considerable hardships and inconveniences", was moved by G. A. Natesan of Madras and was supported by Bhulabhai Desai from Bombay and Asaf Ali from Delhi. The passing of the resolution was possible mainly because of the heartfelt sympathy of Annie Besant, who herself had worked for the uplift of untouchables and was impressed by the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India conducted by Shinde.[61] Thus Shinde's success in getting the resolution of abolition of untouchability included in the national programme of the Indian National Congress was an important landmark in the movement for the uplift of the depressed castes. Once it became a part of the programme of the Congress, it continued to be handled by various national leaders with different views.

Enccuraged by his success, Shinde organised **'Akhil Bharatiya Asprishyata Niwarak Parishad'** in Bombay, on 22nd, 23rd and 24th March, 1918. The conference aimed at the removal of untouchability from public and personal life. The Conference was attended by prominent political leaders such as Jayakar, Bipinchandra Pal, C.

V. Mehta, V. I. Patel, S. A. Belavi, R. G. Pradhan, Bhulabhai Desai, Laxmidas Tersi, B. G. Tilak and others. It was presided over by Sayajirao Maharaj Gayakawad. M. R. Jayakar initiated the resolution of removing untouchability in public life, and opening temples, tanks and wells to the untouchables, and requesting the Shankaracharya to issue ordinances to remove the religious disabilities of the untouchables. Dadasaheb Khaparde, a staunch opponent of abolition of untouchability previously, was carried away by the mood of the meeting and presented the resolution of appointing a Royal Commission for removing disabilities of the untouchables. Tilak initiated the resolution of admitting untouchable representatives in the Provincial Congress, Industrial Conference, and Social Conference, and made a fiery speech that he would not recognise God as god, if he had sanctioned the institution of untouchability.[62]

On 2nd April, 1918, Dr. Kurtakoti, the Karavir Shankaracharya, published his letter in 'Kesari' expressing his views on untouchability. He said, "Certain tenets of religion such as untouchability are required to be essentially observed by the faithful observers of Vedic religion (Dharmacharani Vaidika) who are very small in number. The average house-holders (Laukikacharani) who form the majority of the population need not be so meticulous as the Vaidikas. Taking into consideration the changed situation, they should have fraternal feeling towards the untouchables. The untouchables should achieve reform in their mental attitude and external behaviour. One need not consider that the practice of untouchability was obsolete. However, it needs to be mended with the view that the untouchables should not break away from the Hindu society. If the efforts of D. C. Mission of India are continued, we, the Acharyas of various Dharmapithas, would decide to mend the ancient religious edicts."[63]

Another feature of the Conference was individual signing of a declaration stating that he would not observe untouchability in his personal life and would make personal effort for its abolition on social level. The Decla-

ration was first signed by Ravindranath Tagore, and he was succeeded by many others. However, Tilak hesitated and postponed signing the Declaration as he was dissuaded from signing it by his followers like Dadasaheb Karandikar. Shinde frankly brought to the notice of Tilak that this act of his not signing the declaration would cast slur not only on Tilak's character, but would also damage the prestige of the Nationalist Party.[64] It was of no avail. However, though Tilak afterwards personally saw that the resolution of abolition of social untouchability was passed in the Lonavala Prantik Congress Conference, his previous refusal to agree to abolish untouchability in his private life, strengthened the orthodox stubbornness towards untouchables, and aggravated the bitterness of untouchables towards the Nationalists. Thus, the hesitating steps taken by Shankaracharya of Karaveer and the social orthodox attitude of Tilak emboldened the conservative party to pursue offensive activities towards scheduled castes. The orthodox members of the Municipality of Poona refused to pass the resolution of opening water-tanks in the city to scheduled castes, even though the public opinion was in favour of it; Patel's Bill for inter-marriage was strongly opposed by Tilakites. Shinde felt very much disappointed by this overbearing attitude of the Nationalists and was required to change his attitude towards the Nationalists.

Shinde gave a second thought to the measure of separate representation of untouchables in the Legislative Council, from the view point of safeguarding the interests of the untouchables. He continued his opposition to communal representation to Marathas and others, but considered proportional representation for untouchables essential. The idea of proportional representation for safeguarding the interests of the minorities was also of Unitarian origin.

At the meeting at Bengalore in December, 1918, Shinde made a public declaration of the change in his policy, viz., that of demanding separate representation for untouchables. However, he assured the Nationalists that nothing that would cause harm to the national in-

terests, would be demanded by the D. C. Mission.[65] The Liberals expressed their hope that untouchables would get one or two seats in the Legislative Assembly of the Bombay Province. On this, Shinde, as the Secretary of the D. C. Mission, expressed his view that if nomination seats were granted to the untouchables, their nomination should be done neither by Government nor by merely the institutions of untouchables, but by the elected members of the Council.[66]

When the Southborough Franchise Committee visited India for deciding the issue of representation of Indians in the Legislative councils of the Provinces, B. R. Ambedkar and V. R. Shinde were invited in January, 1919, as witnesses for inquiring into the questions of Franchise for the untouchables.[67] Ambedkar, who in spite of his high qualifications, had suffered severe humiliation at the hands of caste Hindus at Baroda, was very much well-versed in recent thoughts on representative institutions. He very ably stated the case for effective representation for untouchables through his writings in 'The Times of India'[68] and the written statement that he presented to the Southborough Committee.[69] Ambedkar's demands were more advanced than those of V. R. Shinde. Shinde in his written statement,[70] demanded 5 seats for untouchables in Bombay Province on linguistic basis[71]—one for Karnataka, one for Gujarat, one for Sindh, one for Maharashtra, and one for the city of Bombay. While Ambedkar, in his memorandum demanded 9 seats for untouchables on the basis of population. Shinde too afterwards, in his interview with the Commission, demanded nine seats for the untouchables.[72] In the case of franchise, Ambedkar stated that the property and educational qualification for franchise for untouchables should be quite low as they had few opportunities for education and employment. Shinde, no doubt, demanded lower qualification for untouchables as compared to others, still his enthusiasm for stimulating educational and economic elevation of untouchables specified the qualification as passing of fourth standard of primary school and earning of Rs. 144 per year for the franchise for untouchables.[73] Shinde added that if special electorates were not

granted he would most reluctantly accept nomination. In case of nomination, the existing associations of untouchables might be treated as electorates for selecting candidates.[74] However, after the interviews, Ambedkar criticised Shinde for his statement demanding such higher qualifications for franchise and believed that the few electors so qualified would be certainly influenced by Shinde. He declared that, in this situation it was difficult to get the real representative of untouchables elected. However, both Shinde and Ambedkar were greatly disappointed at the attitude of the Government of Bombay, who in their note to the committee positively discouraged any kind of special representation for the untouchables.[75] The consequent report of the Southborough Committee granted only one nominated seat to the untouchables.[76] Shinde vehemently criticised the British Government for the injustice done to the untouchables in a public meeting held at Bangalore.[77] Still, he decided to make the best of whatever opportunity he would get for advancing their cause by enacting legislation to remove their social disabilities in using public roads and public water-places. With this view Shinde made efforts to get himself nominated to the seat for the Depressed Classes which was to be filled either by an untouchable or by any one having active sympathy for the cause of the untouchables.[78] However, the Liberals who had taken up the responsibility of implementing the new reforms did not choose V. R. Shinde for the seat. Justice Chandavarkar, the Chairman of the Legislative Council of Bombay, selected for that seat in March 1921, D. D. Gholap,[79] a young Mahar with educational qualification of 6th Standard in high school and had the experience of working along with B. R. Ambedkar.

The year 1920-21 marks the decline of V. R. Shinde's hold over the untouchables and loss of their confidence in him. This was due to the deepening of the schism between the Nationalists and the non-Brahmans. The Nationalists were mostly orthodox Hindus and especially Brahmans, while the non-Brahmans consisted of all castes including untouchables. When Shinde tried to reconcile

the Nationalists and untouchables or scheduled castes he lost his hold on the latter. The untouchables made common cause with non-Brahmans, and in the meeting at Madanpura, presided over by Subhedar G. C. Rokade (27th Octobr 1918), they decided to join hands with the Liberals. Along with the Liberals and non-Brahmans, untouchables made efforts to outwit the claims of the Nationalists that they were representing the entire country consisting of caste-Hindus and untouchables.[80] Thus, Shinde's ideal of national unity was shattered by the folly of the Nationalists and untouchable leaders like S. J. Kamble who joined hands with V. R. Kothari.

Shinde's prestige with the Depressed Classes was ruined also by Gandhiji in the Bijapur Prantik untouchable Conference of 5th May 1918. In this conference when Gandhiji was requested to present the resolution that "The Untouchables support the Lucknow Pact", Gandhiji loudly asked "Are there any untouchables (Acchuta) in this conference?". This question was an unexpected one. At the same time, the teachings of V. R. Shinde till this time that untouchables should not consider themselves 'Acchut' had worked so much on the minds of the educated untouchables, that Gandhiji's question did not get either affirmation or negative answer. Gandhiji instantly took the decision of not presenting the resolution, arguing that the resolution was with reference to untouchables and there were no untouchables in the meeting. He also challenged the fact whether the conference was really that of untouchables.[81]

The explanation forwarded by B. S. Kamat, the President of the conference was that, the conference of the Depressed Classes included men of the caste-society and the untouchables as well. But Gandhiji paid no heed to this explanation. Afterwards, D. N. Patwardhan and D. D. Gholap fought in vain a newspaper war in the 'Jagaruk' edited by V. R. Kothari, on the point as to whether the conference was attended by the untouchables or not.

Dr. Ambedkar's claim since 1918 to be the sole representative of untouchables reduced Shinde's importance in the eyes of the untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar feared

the domination of the followers of Tilak which was being felt in the Depressed Classes Mission Society in Bombay. He apprehended that the Tilak-party would dominate the administration which would come into being after the introduction of the Montford Reforms. Dr. Ambedkar did not make distinction between Shinde's progressive views with regard to national unity and the power-seeking tendency of some of the Nationalists. Dr. Ambedkar, with the support of Shahu Maharaj and the Liberals, aimed at overthrowing Shinde's leadership of the untouchables.

Shinde had the foresight to see, on the one hand, the advantages of the close association of untouchables with caste-society, and on the other hand, the danger that would affect the national interests if they were divided on political matters. The All India Untouchable Conference was organised by Dr. Ambedkar at Nagpur on 30th, 31st May, and 1st June, 1920. Shinde sent his men Papanna and G. A. Gawai to introduce the resolution on the association between caste-Hindus and the untouchables in the selection of the representatives of untouchables to the Bombay Legislative Council. Shinde's men were won over by Dr. Ambedkar, and Ambedkar vehemently protested against Shinde's efforts of such association. He got resolution of protest against V. R. Shinde passed in the Conference. and thus routed Shinde's constructive efforts for bringing about close association between caste-Hindus and the untouchables. Ambedkar protested even against the running of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India by the caste-Hindus.[82] Thus, Ambedkar gravely damaged the prestige and the leadership of V. R. Shinde in the Depressed Classes Mission Society in social matters and that of "Anti-untouchability League" in political matters.

Shinde also came in association with Gandhiji as both of them were interested in removal of untouchability of the depressed classes. However, there was some difference in their views. Shinde believed from the very beginning that abolition of Caste-System along with its restraints of following only the caste professions, inter-dining and of inter-marriage were the only effective means

of removing untouchability; while Gandhiji's development of thought in case of untouchability was a gradual one. At the beginning, Gandhiji considered Caste-system and untouchability as two separate entities. He sincerely believed in Varna-Ashram system and Caste-discipline but he did not believe in the stigma against the touch of the untouchables. On the recommendation of Amritlal Thakkar, Gandhiji accepted Dudabhai, a Dhed, in his Satyagraha Ashram[83] and braved the opposition to Dudabhai's admission to the Ashram. Dudabhai abided by vows of Truth, Non-violence, celibacy, control of Palate, non-stealing, non-possession and Swadeshi. In the revised constitution of the Ashram on 20th May, 1915, Gandhiji included the vow of eradication of untouchability. However, he laid down—"This vow does not extend to association for purposes of eating".[84] He further added that the discipline of caste seemed to have done no harm to the country and there was no reason to believe that eating in company promoted brotherhood ever so slightly. All that Gandhiji desired in 1915, was the eradication of evil cf untouchability (stigma against touch). By this time Shinde and Shahu Maharaj had achieved great progress in inter-caste dining, in close association in social gatherings, and in aboliton of caste-barriers and caste-system.[85] Gandhiji's attitude, as compared to Shinde's and Shahu Chhatrapati's achievement was a retrograde step. During his tour in Madras, Gandhiji was urged by the untouchables there to start a compaign for abolition of untouchability similar to the movement of Non-co-operation. Gandhiji agreed to this call. In 1920, the Congress passing under the leadership of Gandhiji, adopted a distinctly political resolution for the admission of the depressed classes to Hindu Temples.[85A] Gandhiji, also included the item of abolition of Untouchability in his 'Constructive Programme' of the Non-co-operation movement. In the Nagpur Session of National Congress in 1920, Gandhiji included the name of V. R. Shinde in the subject committee.

Shinde, however, rang a note of warning about including the miserable untouchables in the fierce struggle bet-

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ween the two mighty rivals. He argued that untouchables had just recently started getting favourable treatment and grants from the British Government to their institutions, reform programmes, and also a nominated seat in the Legislative Councils. They would be losing these advantages which they had gained. The Congress too, was not that strong to help the untouchables financially, and the untouchables losing the support of the Government would mean a great loss to these suppressed classes.[86] They should not be involved in the national struggle of non-co-operation. Gandhiji agreed with Shinde's argument. After the Non-co-operation Movement was withdrawn, Gandhiji organised the programme of Socio-economic upliftment. In this programme as well, he included the abolition of untouchability along with Khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity. He even earmarked a small sum of Rs. 63,000 from the Tilak Swarajya Fund for the amelioration of the condition of untouchables. However, a very small sum of Rs. 43,381 was spent between 1921 to 1923.[87] Till 1923, though abolition of untouchability was included in the national programme, no effective radical programme could be planned.

Since 1923, the **Tabligh** and the **Shuddhi** movement created a lot of confusion.[87A] Untouchables became miserable victims in Kerala and other places. Maulana Mohammed Ali, in his presidential speech in Coconada Congress of 27th December 1923, considered conversion of untouchables to Islam as the best means for removing untouchability. because if untouchables were accepted in Hindu society it would create a problem of creating one more caste in Hinduism.[88] In 1923 Malaviyaji became the President of Hindu Mahasabha and he also included removal of untouchability in the programme of Hindu Mahasabha and pleaded that untouchables should be given access to public sectors and public water places.[89] A scheme of building temples for the use of both the caste people and untouchables also came to be discussed by S. M. Mate. However, he found that the scheme was not palatable to any of the religious organisations from Varakaries to the orthodox.[90]

In the mean-while the Vyakom temple at Travancore became the most prominent example of the evil of untouchability. Due to the miseries of untouchability thousands of untouchables in Travancore left the Hindu fold and were converted to Christianity or Islam. Efforts for abolition of untouchability were also made by Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj, so some of the untouchables became followers of Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj. The untouchables converted to Islam or Christianity were allcwed free use of the roads near about the temple; but the untouchables who professed themselves to be Hindus or followers of Brahmo Samaj or Arya Samaj were not allowed to move along these roads.[90A] Ezhawas, a highly cultured and educated class, Pulyas a class of agricultural labourers, Pariahs an artisan class, and Shansars, a class of joggery makers, were considered as untouchables and were prohibited entry to these roads.[90B] The agitation confined itself to securing the use of forbidden roads to these depressed classes. The State Government insisted that Brahmo Samajists and Arya Samajists should declare that they were non-Hindus, and then alone they would be allowed entry to these roads.

Shinde, a Brahmo Samajist Hindu and Missionary of Malabar Brahmo Samaj, participated in this satyagraha under the instructions of Calcutta Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. Gandhiji, as well, kept himself well-informed of the incidents in the Satyagraha and gave support to Satyagrahis.[90C] Gandhiji's encouragement to Satyagrahis added a tinge of political movement to the Vyakom Satyagrah. The Billavas, who were orginally a class of untouchables and then at that time the prestigeous members of the Malabar Brahmo Samaj felt scared of the Gandhi-cap of V. R. Shinde. They lodged a complaint against Shinde's wearing a Gandhi cap. They thought that it might bring Billavas into trouble with the European Company employers and the Government. Shinde gave up using not only Gandhi cap but any cap at all.[91]

By this time Malaviyaji presented a resolution supporting the Vyakom Satyagraha in the conference of

Hindu Maha Sabha. He was required to withdraw the resolution due to pressure from some orthodox members.

The cause of the poor untouchables came to be neglected by all the orthodox, liberals and non-changers, that K. G. Patade, the Secretary of the Depressed Classes Mission branch of Poona, found it difficult to get any one of the dozen of All India leaders of the Congress to preside over the 'All India Untouchability Conference' to be held at Belgaum. Shinde felt very much disappointed to see the situation. He wrote a very strong letter to Gandhiji dated 25-11-1924,[92] mentioning that Gandhiji was giving a third place to untouchability in his programme of Khadi, Hindu-Muslim Unity and untouchability. Shinde pointed out that there was difference between the professions of the principle and the practice of it by the Congress, even under Gandhiji in case of the policy towards untouchables. He bitterly pointed out how the Vyakom Satyagraha was 'beautifully neglected' by the Congress leaders including Pandit Malaviyaji and Gandhiji. Shinde warned Gandhiji that the politicians—both Indian and foreign—were neglecting the problem of the outcaste and recognise untouchables as a political asset. Gandhiji's reply was typical of that of a nationalist politician. He did not give serious thought to the warning of Shinde. He remarked, "untouchability occupies first place in your heart only because it is the sole concern for you. In my heart, it occupies an equal place along with the rest, i.e., Khadi and Hindu-Muslim unity."[93]

This was followed by Gandhiji's visit to Vyakom on 9th March 1925.[93A] Gandhiji stayed with the Satyagrahis and explained to them the implications of true Satyagraha. He told them that the struggle for opening of the roads round the temple was but a small skirmish in the big battle for amelioration of the general conditions of the untouchables and unapproachables. Gandhiji interviewed the orthodox Nambudris and paid visit to Trivandrum where he waited on Her Highness and met the Dewan. Gandhiji's presence in Vyakom focussed the attention of the whole of India on the movement, and was

instrumental in Travancore Assembly passing a resolution favouring the reform. It elicited a considered reply from the Dewan. The authorities relented and opened the roads on three sides of the temple. However, after the authorities removed the barricades, the only enemy that remained was the orthodox opinion.[94]

Gandhiji failed to take serious notice of the problem of untouchability and launched the movement of Civil Disobedience for winning **Swaraj**. In the salt Satyagraha at Dandi, K. B. Patade, the Secretary of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India opposed Gandhiji for launching Swaraj movement before the abolition of untouchability, and forcibly took away the earthen pot containing salt prepared by Gandhiji's Satyagrahis.[95] Gandhiji's inclusion of removal of untouchability in the national programme in 1921, and its miscarriage did more harm than help to the Movement of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India. It created a big show that satisfied the Nationalists organisation but did not achieve much.

'Foreign Government' was not a small factor that was to be unnoticed by the nationalists, in dealing with the untouchables. This very factor, after 1926, showed greater interest in the untouchables. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, a barrister and learned doctor in economics and politics, was appointed to the nominated seat for untouchables in 1926, and the number of the nomination seats for untouchables was increased from one to two when demanded by Dr. Ambedkar.[96] The Government readily appointed 'Start Committee' to make inquiry into the condition of the backward classes in 1929, and started a separate 'Backward Class Department' in 1930.[97] When the Simon Commission visited India in 1928, Dr. Ambedkar was included in the Provincial Committee to make recommendations regarding desirable changes in the future Constitution.[98] Though Ambedkar favoured the idea of a truly democratic republican Constitution, he demanded representation for untouchables in proportion to their population. The Simon Commission, a diplomatic move of the Imperialists, increased the population

of untouchables in its report to 20 per cent of the population. However, it reduced the percentage of seats to untouchables to 8 per cent and required the untouchable representatives to get their names certified by the Governor.[99]

This injustice by the Simon Commission aroused Ambedkar's anger and he felt that it was only Self-Government (Swaraj) that would give true political and economic relief to the people. However, the slow pace of reform towards abolition of untouchability, and scant respect that was paid to the legislation of the legislative councils by the orthodox in opening public places to untouchables, forced Ambedkar to take resort to the very framing of a new constitution. He desired to inscribe in the constitution the fundamental rights of all the people, and the special safeguards for unobstructed exercise of these civic rights by the untouchables. The necessary opportunity he got very soon, when he was invited to attend the session of the Round Table Conference in 1930-31, Ambedkar presented the grievances of the untouchables very effectively before the leaders of the Labour Party, other members of the Parliament and the British public. He won the sympathy of Macdonald, the Prime Minister, and Wedgewood, the Secretary of State for India, for giving political representation to untouchables from the view point of humanitarian considerations. Ambedkar added Appendix III to the Volume II of the Proceedings of the Minority Sub-Committee. In this Appendix he put forward the plan of Fundamental Rights for all the Indians and special safeguards for untouchables in their exercise of civic liberties.[100]

The Second Round Table Conference was a triangular fight among national integration forces represented by Mahatma Gandhi, various 'minorities' seeking political representation for protecting themselves from the oppression by the Hindu majority, and the British Imperialism desirous of perpetuating its control over India through the policy of divide and rule. The British National Government that had come to power in 1931 under Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister, and Sir Samuel Hoare as

Secretary of State for India, favoured the members of the minority committee to outwit Gandhiji. Gandhiji was ready to concede separate electorate to Muslims and Sikhs—the politically powerful communities—on the basis of their historical and political importance, but he was opposed tooth and nail to grant the same to Indian Christians and untouchables.[101] He emphasised that separate electorate and reserved seats for untouchables would ruin their future prospects, and they would continue to remain untouchables permanently.[102] While Ambedkar held the view that unless untouchables secured separate political representation in proportion to their population, their civic rights would not be secure. Ultimately Dr. Ambedkar was able to overpower Gandhiji by concluding a Minority Pact on 13th November, 1931, apparently with the blessings of the British diplomats.[103] The nation's unity was again threatened. Previously it was due to the separation of Muslims from non-Muslims in 1909, and now, it was being threatened by the division of caste-Hindus and untouchable Hindus. In the meanwhile, V. R. Shinde was very strongly opposing Mahatma Gandhi for opposing the demands of the untouchables for reserved seats. He frankly said in a public meeting presided by G. K. Gadgil, "Gandhiji is a great leader. He may be having a diplomatic move in his policy towards untouchables. However, his views on untouchables are not worthy of the Mahatma". But when the Minority Pact was signed, V. R. Shinde very vehemently opposed the stand of Dr. Ambedkar in manouvering to get separate electorate and reserved seats for untouchables in the Minority Pact. Jnan Prakash dated 1-11-1931, gives the account of a protest meeting of the Conference of the untouchables organised by P. N. Rajbhoj, a Chambhar leader and President of Provincial All India Depressed Classes Association, Poona, in the hall of Sarvajanika Sabha.[104] P. N. Rajbhoj had very close connections with S. M. Mate,[105] the organiser of 'Asprishyata Niwarak Mandali' that was founded in 1917 at Poona. This Conference, presided by V. R. Shinde, not only protested against Ambedkar's move for the separate constituencies of untouchables from the Hindus, but also initiated the de-

mand for reserved seats for untouchables in the joint electorate of Hindus. This idea of joint electorate was originally sponsored by the Simon Commission but was later abandoned by it under Government pressure. The scheme for reservation in a joint electorate was sponsored by S. M. Mate, V. R. Shinde and P. N. Rajbhoj. In this meeting, Shinde pleaded the case of reserved seats in the joint electorate so unequivocally that the demand for separate constituencies received a great set-back.[106] Dr. Munje, the President of Hindu Maha Sabha, also agreed to this scheme and the scheme was given a final shape in Raja-Munje Pact of 3rd March, 1932 and Poona Pact of 24th September, 1932.

The Poona Pact satisfied Shinde's desire for political education and political assertion of the Depressed Classes. It also satisfied Shinde's insistence on their association with caste-Hindus. It prevented the traditionally forced unity of the master and the slave whom the master professed to represent. It acknowledged the right of the Depressed Classes to elect their representatives and also maintained their oneness with the caste-Hindus by allowing the caste-Hindus to have a say in the joint electorate to favour the best among the untouchables as their choice.

V. R. Shinde's retirement from the Depressed Classes Mission is considered by some critics as the defeat of Shinde's work. They pertinently point out that, in spite of his selfless service to the untouchables, Shinde had to leave the work halfway and retire without any means of livelihood in his old age.[107] After a careful study, it seems that Shinde's retirement from the Depressed Classes Mission of India was the natural result of his deliberate and well-planned efforts for training the untouchables in self-help. In 1917, as the movement for autonomy spread in all walks of life, the Depressed Classes youths in D. C. Mission, Shri A. K. Ghogare, S. J. Kamble Shripatrao Thorat, Subhedar Ghadge, Umale, M. Sadaphule, Bhatkar, Kisan Muktaji Sonavane, etc. aspired to take the management of the mission in their own hands. By 1919, the situation for such transfer was quite ripe as the constitutional development of the Mission branches

in Bangalore, Poona, Nagpur and Hubli was completed and the work of the movement of abolition of untouchability had spread all over India.[108] The demand of the untouchable youths for autonomy in D. C. Mission branches was well founded. Young men like Bhatkar, Gawai and Kisan Muktaji Sonavane, started smarting under the controlling pressure of Caste-Hindus, even that of V. R. Shinde. The false allegations that Shinde did not give encouragement for higher education for the untouchables and insisted on technical education, that the hostels of the untouchables were not taking proper care of the untouchable students, that Shinde was wasting the funds of the D. C. Mission unnecessarily on hostels which funds could have been utilised for higher education of the untouchable students by way of scholarships, were levelled against him.[109] The allegation that Shinde was not giving encouragement to higher education of untouchables was proved false by the evidence given by K. R. Madhale, the present President of the D. C. Mission Society, Poona, and justice R. R. Bhole, as to how both of them as the students in the D. C. Mission hostel had received encouragement for getting higher eductaion, and how they received encouragement to take up the leadership of the Depressed Classes.[110] The financial position of the country, the acute shortage of food after the War, were the calamities which affected the entire country and not only the depressed classes' hostels. Even the Christian Missionaries closed some of their boardings. In spite of these difficulties, boardings of untouchables were continued by Shinde and the D. C. Mission, which was really very creditable for them. These hostels were considered very essential by Shinde for the cultural elevation of the untouchable children, and they certainly proved to be so, if we take note of the generation of Depressed Class leaders as D. D. Gholap, G. A. Gawai, Waghmare, Justice R. R. Bhole, P. T. Borale, K. R. Madhale, M. D. Shewale and others. The insistence of Shinde on technical education and the opposition of some Depressed Classes youths to it, bears an interesting coincidence with the dissent expressed by lower class students in England to

technical training that was provided to them by the liberal factory owners and educationalists.[111] The lower class students, who were accustomed to the technical work felt attracted to white-collar academic education, which they felt would give them better status. But the real need of this Industrial age and the real opportunities are to be found more in technical skill than in mere clerical efficiency. The fact is now admitted not only by the educationalists but also the workers in the D. C. Mission as K. R. Madhale.[112] The allegations were found to be baseless when Yuvaraja Sir Kantiraya Narasinharaja Wadiyar Bahadur, G.C.I.E., of Mysore held an open inquiry into them on 5th September, 1921.[113]

The conflict over the issue of autonomy commenced when Poona Depressed Classes Youths demanded autonomy in the well-planned, well-equipped campus of Ahalyashrama that was developed by Shinde, and the demand was refused by the Mother institution of D.. C. Mission at Bombay.[114] The management of D. C. Mission was alerady displeased with Shinde for the inclusion of Nationalists in the Managing Committee, and for the transfer of his centre of activity to Poona,[115] which they felt belittled their position. Justice Chandavarkar resigned from presidentship of D. C. Mission in 1918.[116] Sayyed Abdul Kadar retired in 1920, so did Vamanrao Sadashiv Sohoni shortly afterwards in 1921. Shinde decided to grant autonomy to each one of the branches. He handed over the responsibility of the work of the D. C. Mission branch at Bangalore to the local organisation of 'Hindu Depressed Classes Mission' in 1921. The Managing Committee of the mother-institute of D. C. Mission at Bombay protested vehemently against this policy of Shinde, and demanded his resignation of General Secretaryship which Shinde tendered readily in 1921.[117] However, they could not help but request him to work as Organising Secretary: he was also the founder trustee of the Mission. Shinde continued to be the Secretary of the Poona branch as the responsibility of construction of the building of Ahalyashrama had not yet been completed. The building worth Rs. 1,12,318 started taking shape

in three stages—1921, 1922, 1923. In 1922, when the second stage of the work of the construction was over, Shinde prepared a new Constitution for the parent institute of D. C. Mission of India at Bombay.[118] The rules framed accordingly, invested the local committee elected from the local members (majority of whom were untouchables), with autonomy in respect of the working of the branch. They were free to invite Missionaries from the parent institute. It was ordained that wherever possible untouchables should be appointed in place of authority.[119]

In 1923, when the work of the construction of Ahalyashrama was completed on 15th April, 1923, Shinde framed an ideal Constitution for the Poona Branch of the D. C. Mission with the help of A. K. Ghogare, Subhedar Ghadge, S. J. Kamble, Shripatrao Thorat and other untouchable leaders. Out of 22 members of the Managing Committee, 2|3rd seats were given to untouchables by giving two each to Mahars, Mangs, Chambhars, Bhangis and Musalmans. From the remaining seats, Marathas. Brahmans, Parsis and others were given representation of one seat each. Of the 8 officials, 6 were to be from the untouchables and on the board of trustees out of two one untouchable was to be appointed.[120] The Constitution was adopted by the newly elected Managing Committee of the Poona branch. The autonomy granted to the untouchables and Shinde's renouncing the General Secretaryship of the Poona branch made the untouchable leaders feel very much grateful to him. They pressed him to accept a small amount of pension which Shinde gracefully rejected pointing out that he could not accept the money which he himself collected for the benefit of the Depressed Classes.[121] The members of the Mission, thereupon presented to him an address on his 51st birthday on 23rd April 1923.[122] The address recalled his selfless service by conferring on him the title of **KARMAVEER.** He became known afterwards as Karmaveer V. R. Shinde. Among other titles were 'The most beloved', 'The great teacher', 'One, whose learning is recognised by the most learned'. and 'The propagator of true religion'. They expressed their gratitude for founding the Depressed

Classes Mission Society of India for the elevation of untouchables, for granting autonomy to untouchable youths in the Mission, and for raising the status of untouchables as active component members of the Indian nation. They also pleaded that he should be the 'Trustee for Life-time' of the Mission which indicates their deep faith in Shinde. K. K. Sakat, an untouchable Mang leader, sought Shinde's pardon for criticising him unduly during the troubled times.[123]

Shinde continued to work as an honorary organising secretary of the Mission and the founder trustee for life-time. That he did not demand or even think of any claim on the Mission for himself or for his family, increased the admiration of the members of the Mission for him. They involved him in the programmes of the Mission during his active life and also attended upon him in his last illness.[124] At the time of Shinde's birth centenary year 1973, it was the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India, Poona, that presented a bronze statue of Karmaveer Shinde to the Poona Municipal Corporation for installing it in the city, and also gave a small bust of Karmaveer Shinde to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to commemorate the memorable selfless service of the Karmaveer to the Depressed Classes.[125] Thus, the granting of autonomy to the Depressed Classes brought credit to Shinde. On the other hand, it was the members of the caste-Hindu society in the D. C. Mission Society at Bombay, who were not ready to renounce their powers in the D. C. Mission and played vile with Shinde by secretly passing the resolution of removing him from the Board of Trustees in 1922. In fact they were not authorised to do this. They also filed a suit against Shinde for misappropriation of funds. Shinde was exonerated of these accusations by the decision of the High Court, which again reinstated him as a founder trustee for life-time on the Trustee Board of the parent Institute of D. C. Mission Society and required the parent institute to pay Shinde for the expenses of the Court case.[126] On this success in 1925, Shinde was honoured with an address by the non-Brahmans and untouchables in Poona.

It is significant to note that Shinde did not wish to impose any religious dogma on the untouchables. As a believer in Liberal Religion, Shinde confined his teachings to broad principles of morality and humanitarianism. He frankly said that neither Depressed Classes Mission Society nor the Prarthana Samaj insisted that untouchables should accept Brahmo religion.[127] S. M. Mate, while writing about Shinde says that Shinde did not show interest in the temple entry movement only because "he could not do so without being unfaithful to the disbelief in image worship which was upheld by Brahmo religion."[128] Shinde did not give much importance to temple entry movement not only because it did not fit in the religion of Brahmo, but also because there were practical difficulties in it. It was a confrontation with the orthodox and as such, it was a useless time-consuming movement that would not in the least raise the moral level of untouchables anyway more than what Shinde was doing through his religious discourses and **Upasanas** conducted for them. B. D. Wayadande, who was a follower of S. M. Mate in his movement, praised the religious programme of **Upasana** of Shinde as more constructive than the unending deliberation with **Shastris** for getting their consent for temple entry which they would never give.[129] Shinde considered temple-entry movement as a political stunt in which not only the caste-Hindus and untouchables had political motives, but even the British government was playing a nasty role of supressing the movement. The British Government, on the pretext of maintaining order and peace, encouraged the untouchables to abolish their stigma by accepting Christianity.[130] In fact, Shinde considered temple-entry, opening public water places, and public places to the untouchables, as mere external treatment for a disease which was consuming the body organism of the country internally.[131]

Shinde said, "Eradication of untouchability can be done only by abolition of the hierarchical caste-system."[132] Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrav felt rather nervous over this 'radical' statement and feared that Shinde would involve the reformer unnecessarily to fight on two fronts. Even

Gandhiji separated these two issues for some time till 1930. Afterwards Siddheshwar Shastri admitted that not only he himself but also Mahatma Gandhi had to accept the same view.[133] Shinde was convinced that the untouchables, even if converted to Christianity or Islam, could not shed their lowly position, even among the Christians or Muslims. Before Ambedkar, he had considered the possibility of turning to Buddhism as a religion that would work out the uplift of untouchables. But he found that the ancient Buddhism of Gautam Buddha, though it propounded an excellent liberal religion though **Dhammapada**, it discarded caste-distinction only in case of the Bhikshus. The house-holders continued to observe the caste-distinctions. Shinde thought of supplementing Buddhism with the social order recommended by the Brahmo Dharma. By the efforts of Brahmo Dharma, the Billavas of Mangalore were uplifted from their untouchability by the work of a Brahmo Pratapchandra Mujumdar, and Namashudras of Bengal also had succeeded in getting their untochability abolished. In his tcur of Burma in 1927, Shinde had seen the casteless society of the Buddhists. He, therefore, encouraged Narsu Laxmi of Madras and Manjari Ramayya of Calicut in their spread of Buddhism among the untouchables there.[134]

However, Shinde did nct believe that mere religious conversion of the untouchables to any other religion or even their purification (**Shuddhi**), and admission in the Hindu religion, was going to solve their problem or would remove the bane of lowly position. Shinde expressed his fears to Swami Sraddhanand when he was conducting the purification of groups of thousands of untouchables.[135]

Shinde suggested that the socio-religious and political uplift of the untouchables so far done needs to be consolidated by a united, well-organised and well-planned constructive programme of all the agencies such as Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, Depressed Classes Mission, Social Service League, and others in this work. The scheme of a ccnstructive, enduring programme of compulsory education, providing work to them, preaching of a liberal Hindu religion, improving their level of morality and ame-

nities of medical help and hospitals must be instituted permanently for helping them in their progress.[136] The untouchables should be encouraged in their self-effort to abolish evil social practices and caste-distinctions among them. The landless labourers among them were simply slaves of the landlords particularly in Madras. Shinde urged that they be given facilities for bringing fallow land under cultivation, and should be properly educated to guard their interests and not to depend on doles.[137] This programme needs to be spread over a long period and space.

Shinde's Contribution

Thus, Shinde brought about a peaceful social reform of untouchables between 1906 and 1917. He took inspiration from the indigenous saints and the western concept of Liberal Religion, and started Depressed Classes Mission Society of India in 1906 for the elevation of the untouchables in India under the auspices of Prarthana Samaj of Bombay. Gradually, he transplanted the Mission to a bigger All India level, and in 1908, opened its membership to any worker — Indian or foreign — who felt interested in this work. Shinde's research in the origin and problem of untouchability, and his persuasive and powerful speeches and writings convinced the intelligentsia of the injustice and inhumanity of the practice of untouchability. The Mission aimed at abolition of untouchability by abolition of caste-system; and this was to be achieved by intimate association of the members of caste society with the members of untouchable castes. He abolished caste distinctions among the untouchables who came in contact with the Depressed Classes Mission society, with careful planning of the programme of service to women, men, and children catering to the needs of their educational, cultural and economic needs and associating untouchables and caste society people together. In this programme of Association, Shinde, a sociologist, knew the importance of initiative to be taken by the higher liberal members of Indian Society. Shinde also utilised the services of the wives of the members of Prar-

thana Samaj, who were keen to undertake some such worthy work. The urban society in Bombay favoured Shinde with congenial atmosphere for the reform of untouchables and also gave liberal amounts of money which he collected from all stratas of society, (from humble house wives contributing handful of rice, to big trusts that gave big sums). Shinde's work prospered due to his organising skill in framing constitution of the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India, the sincerity of the Missionaries who worked along with him and the co-operation given by untouchables whose masses in the urban areas were only waiting for a saviour to put them on the path of progress. The untouchables under the auspices of the Depressed Classes Mission sent their children to the hostels for the quick uplift of their society in one generation, and showed readiness to benefit themselves from the educational, social, cultural and economic programme outlined for their benefit by the Depressed Classes Mission. By 1912, the Mission spread its branches in 14 cities with 24 schools, 5 hostels, 55 teachers and 1100 students spending Rs. 20,000 per year. The Mission won a notable victory not only in instilling the spirit of reform of untouchables among the Indian social reformers but also in bringing about transformation in the attitude of the British government towards untouchables. The government shed off its policy of inactivity and neutrality by which it had previously rejected appeals made by untouchables such as that of Gopalnak Vitthalnak Walangkar and Shivram Janaba Kamble till 1910. The Government of Bombay issued the ordinances that scheduled class students should not be debarred from admission to municipal schools and Government schools on account of their untouchability. Special grants were issued to their hostels and their schools started getting the benefit of grant-in-aid. The Governor showed consideration even in removing the brand of criminality on the Mangs. The Government of India sought recommendations from V. R. Shinde as to what measures should be adopted for the reform of untouchables on the administrative level and consequently in 1917 opened recruitment in Indian army for untoucha-

bles. The rulers of Indian States such as Barcda, Indore, Mysore, Kolhapur were benefitted by the guidance of Shinde in their reform activity with regard to untouchables. Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur and the ruler of Mysore not only opened schools for them but also admitted untouchables on very extensive scale to administrative jobs and abolished untouchability in their state considerably.

The general level of the untouchables showed signs of improvement. Their women held a Conference separate from men, delivered speeches, read essays and also cooked for the community dinner of 400 men from various stratas of society, at the time of Maharashtra Parishad in 1912. Shinde's leadership in the movement of abolition of untouchability was quite supreme in 1917. The Indian National Congress, at his instance adopted the resolution of abolition of vexatious socio-religious disabilities on untouchables at the national level. Thus, the social reform movement of untouchables was supported by the people in general in industrial cities, by the British officers, the educated people, the untouchables, the social reformers and nationalists, and even by religious authorities as Kurtkoti Shankaracharaya. The free mixing of untouchables in railway, market-places, public meetings and social gatherings, their admission to the residences of reformists and the community dinners had become a usual phenomenon in the social life of many cities.

The situation suffered a setback in 1918 when the Montford Reforms were on the anvil. The clash of political interests of non-Brahmans and Brahmans, the moderates and the extremists, resulted in causing a great breach in the normal relationship between these groups. The climax of the situation was reached when Tilak, in spite of his verbose speech in favour of removal of untouchability, refused to sign the delcaration of non-observance of untouchability in personal life. The Brahmanic orthodoxy was jubilant and reinvigorated its opposition to the just claims of the scheduled castes in favour of equality. The Poona Municipality refused to open its tanks to untouchables. The opposition camp of non-Brahman leaders won over the following of untouchables. Shinde,

who had uptil now clung to his original stand of National Unity and close association if caste-Hindus and untouchables, felt constrained to change his stand for saving the interest of untouchables, and demanded separate electorates and separate representation for untouchables. This was against the policy which he had pursued so far. However, the political Considerations jeopardised Shinde's leadership of the depressed classes.

In 1923 the problem of untouchables became more confounded. Muslim League leaders insisted on separation of untouchables from Hindus in calculating the proportion of Hindu and Muslim population for representation in Council. Christian Missionaries started mass-conversion of untouchables; and Gandhiji included the programme of abolition of untouchability in his 'Constructive programme'. However, Gandhiji's activity had features quite different from that of the social reformers like V. R. Shinde. Shinde had started his work on the basis of social injustice, while Gandhiji started it as a part of Swaraj movement and national unification movement. Both Shinde and Gandhiji attacked the problem of untouchability with great sincerity of purpose, but from different angles.

The essential features of the caste system as described by G. S. Ghurye in his book **"Caste, Class, and Occupation"** are segmental division of society, hierarchical order of the Castes, restrictions on feeding and social intercourse, civil and religious disabilities on lower castes and privileges of the higher castes, lack of unrestricted choice of occupation and caste endogamy. Untouchability or the concept of pollution is an essential element of the caste system as was practised by higher castes towards lower castes with increasing degree of their lowly position in caste hierarcy. Due to the concept of pollution there appeared restrictions over feeding with reference to Brahman caste and ultimately Hindu Society was divided into five groups viz. Brahmans, the castes from whose hands Brahmans could accept cooked food, the castes from whose hands Brahmans could accept water but not food, the castes from whose hands Brahmans could accept neither

fcod nor water but could tolerate their touch, and the castes whose even touch is not accepted by Brahmans and caste Hindus. The social disabilities that were enforced on untouchables prevented them from getting water from public water tanks, from entry in caste Hindu temples and from admission to schools. Shinde who considered untouchability an essential feature of Caste-System aimed at outright abolition of both and resorted to inter-community dinners with untouchables as an effective measure for increasing social intercourse between caste-Hindus and untouchables. Shinde had, as we had seen earlier, started schools for admitting both caste-society students and untouchable students together. He also emphasised importance of inter-caste marriage. His ultimate aim was to create casteless society. On the other hand, Gandhiji considered Caste-System and untouchability as two different things at the beginning, and aimed at removal of untouchability by entry of untouchables in caste-Hindu temples. He also showed admiration for the caste-system for its discipline and social service.[137A] He rejected the idea of inter-community dinners. The Depressed Classes Mission Society of India could not agree with Gandhiji. Gandhiji maintained also cordial relaticns with the orthodox. The orthodox were pleased with Gandhiji's support to Caste-system, but they were irritated to hear his vehement denunciation of Untouchability. They went to the extent of holding protest meetings against Gandhiji.[137B] A number of Congress workers who delivered speeches in abolition of untouchability did not participate in intercommunity dinners. This policy of Gandhiji gave satisfaction neither to the untouchables nor to the caste Hindus.

Gandhiji hit another stroke at untouchability by intensifying the compaign of temple-entry for untouchables in 1929. The Congress working Committee appointed a Sub-Committee with Pandit Malaviyaji and Seth Jamnalal Bajaj. It worked quite well. However, dissentions broke out among them as Malaviyaji restricted his activity-only to temple entry and abolition of untouchability, while Natarajan, Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajgopalachari

considered the entry of untouchables into the Caste-Hindu Houses a more basic reform than temple entry.[137C] With such conflicts, disappointments, fasts and a nation-wide tour for the cause of untouchables, Gandhiji, in 1935, reached the conclusion that "Caste has to go".[137D] He upheld Varnashram with absolute equality of status for all, with freedom of inter-marriage, and inter-dining. Gandhiji explicitly stated that both untouchability and the caste system must go. Thus, though Gandhiji started from a different angle as compared to Shinde, he ultimately reached the same conclusions, that untouchability can be abolished only by abolition of Caste-System.

In the meanwhile, between 1922-23, Shinde granted autonomy to the untouchables in the branches of 'Depressed Classes Mission Society of India', and retired from the Mission in 1923. Shinde could not bear the deplorable condition of untouchables under the leadership of the Congress between 1920-23, and very strongly criticized Gandhiji for his wrong handling of the situation which had created further trouble for untouchables. The untouchables looked more and more to the Government for help and assistance and severed themselves from the nursing offered by the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha. The Hindu Mahasabha leaders after 1923, reopened the process of very moderate reforms for untouchables, curtailing association with untouchables. The Pandits were referred to again and again by these reformers who were thinking of constructing temples of Hindu deities for untouchables and were discussing as to whether other Hindus would pay respect to the image of Hindu deity in the temples of untouchables.

Shinde felt very unhappy in this situation. Through his speeches and writings, he continued to pour criticism on this deplorable condition. He requested the reformist associations as Arya Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Bharat Sevak Samaj, Depressed Classes Mission to organise a common constructive programme for saving the situation of the decline of the number of Hindu population due to the conversion of untouchables to other religions. He also urged them to consolidate the gains of reform among the

untouchables by well planned programme of education, medical help, employment and self-help of untouchables on a permanent basis. Shinde also solved the dilemma of separate constituencies of untouchables by his timely support and elucidation of the system of Joint-electorate for untouchables in 1932.

In the field of abolition of untouchability Shinde established certain principles which, in the course of time are honoured as established truths. Shinde believed that abolition of untouchability is a bilateral process, one side of which is all sided uplift of the untouchables and the other side of which was the close association of the untouchables and the caste-society by abolishing caste-distinctions with their hierarchical basis. Shinde drove the chariot of his work on these two wheels. The other workers who desired to achieve the same goal of abolition of untouchability considered Shinde's measures as too radical, and tried certain aspects of this process singly. Caste-Hindu leaders as Lokamanya Tilak, S. M. Mate, Siddeshwar Shastri Chitrav, Gandhiji and for some time P. N. Rajbhoj as well, believed that untouchability could be removed without abolishing the caste-distinctions and caste-hierarchy.[138] But when some of them like Siddheshwar Shastri Chitrav, P. N. Rajbhoj, and Gandhiji continued to work in this field sincerely they had to admit that unless the Caste-System viz., determining the caste by birth, endogamy, caste-professions were abolished, untouchability could not be effectively abolished. That is why P. N. Rajbhoj who at the beginning believed in superiority of chambhar caste among the untouchables, and was not ready to partake food with Mahars and Mangs, afterwards started his 'Dalit Seva Sangha' hostel for the students of all castes.[139] Gandhiji himself decided to stay in the colony of Bhangis.

Certain others, who stressed merely on the elevation of untouchables, without securing their association with caste-Hindus, as was done by Dr. Ambedkar, found themselves at the end of a blind alley. Shinde believed that the elevation of the untouchables to be real, was to be inextricably woven with their assimilation in the Hindu

Society; and it must lead to their acceptance in the Hindu casteless society. If it was not so, the uplift of the untouchables would be meaningless and their unacceptance by the Hindu-society would lead to great bitterness towards the caste-society. The present movement of the Dalit Panther has proved this truth beyond any doubt.

Shinde believed that the uplift of the untouchables was to be all sided-social, economic, cultural and political. The development of these aspects must be simultaneous. This development, Shinde believed, was a long drawn process which could not be achieved by momentary fits. Neither legislation, nor conversion or purification, nor education and emyloyment alone, was going to cure the age-long disease of untouchability. The quick conversion of the untouchables on large scale by Christians, or by the Muslims, or the purification by Arya Samajists, or the conversion to Buddhism by Ambedkar was not fruitful as they were not accompanied by well-planned constructive programme and persistent efforts for their social and cultural education, effort for their eccnomic uplift, effcrts for their self-help and for their unconditional acceptance by the caste-society. In the absence of these accompaniments, the single programme as temple entry movement, or opening public tanks by legislation or by provision in the constitution for non-recognition of untouchability in public places has proved a failure, as is seen today in the Indian Republic. Tackling the problem of untouchability in rural areas has its own problems which requires a treatment distinct from the measures utilised in urban areas. This has remained still more or less a virgin field where some workers as Baba Adhav are recently making an advance, giving the slogan "One water-place for all the people in the village" **(Ek Gaon, Ek Panotha)**.

However, "Shinde's constructive leadership in the Reform Movement of Untouchables is forgotten and that of trcse whc rendered lip-service is remembered more". says V. S. Sohoni in assessing the work of Shinde. It is worthwhile to trace the cause of this phenomenon. The

constructive social reform for untouchables which Shinde achieved between 1906 to 1918 was carried out in a peaceful manner by him. In this process, he involved not only the Liberals but also won the sympathy of religious authorities, nationalists and the non-Brahmans. So, though Shinde was the architect of the movement, many names such as N. G. Chandavarkar, Dr. Bhandarkar, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharj, Dr. Mann, Tukojirao Holkar, Sayajirao Maharaj, Shivaram Janaba Kamble and others share the credit with him.

The period between 1908 to 1916 was a period of political lull, when social reform movement of Shinde prospered by sympathy of reformers and sympathetic neutrality of the Nationalists, previously led by Chiplunkar. In 1917, when the scramble for political power was started, the Nationalists, majority of whom were from the upper castes, aspired to capture power in the new democratic form of Government by virtue of their educational qualifications. The non-Brahmans and the untouchables, scared of Brahmanic domination due to their past experiences, demanded separate representation for them; and the Moderate leaders won success over Nationalists by promising to support the demand of non-Brahmans. Shinde, a true nationalist, tried to teach them all the real national spirit. However, he too, to save the untouchables from the suppression by the overbearing Nationalists, supported the cause of separate representation for untouchables. Still Dr. Ambedkar far surpassed Shinde in politics of separate representation and also in the demand for a Republican Constitution.

After 1920, Gandhiji's high sounding trumpet of abolition of untouchability without disturbing caste regulations of inter-dining and inter-marriage, made a very effective appeal to the higher castes. Gandhiji wrote and spoke continuously on it till 1932, without bringing about any constructive programme. Silent workers of the type of Shinde, who contributed to introducing the scheme of Joint Electrorate in the Poona Pact remained unnoticed.

Shinde's efforts for reform of untouchables were first initiated in the urban areas, and it achieved success there

due to the new culture of Industrial Revolution. Though the beginning was grand, this programme was impeded in its downward filteration to the rural communities due to various factors such as the rising tide of political movement, the obstinacy on the part of higher castes, both Brahmans and non-Brahmans to maintain their established socio-economic supremacy, with the servility of the lower classes, particularly untouchables. Consequently the work of social reform of untouchables stopped half-way, leaving Shinde's name unknown to the rural population.

There is a general tendency among Indians to be impressed by the fire-works of political victories than by true social reform which would unify society. The social reformer vitiates his case by seeking support from the principles in sacred literature of ancient times. So the work of the social reformer is never considered original one. Furthermore, the social reform needs an effort supported by many hands and nobody knows how much support is given by the real force behind it. This can be very well compared to the lifting up of Govardhana mountain by Krishna who supported it with one of his fingers, while other Gopals were supporting it with their sticks. But the real strength of his cause is the spirit of criticism, of inquiry ushered by the advent of British rule.

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Chapter V

CULTURAL PROBLEMS

In the last Chapter, we saw how V. R. Shinde attempted through a number of movements to bring about the political and economic progress of the lower classes. In this chapter, an attempt is made to review Shinde's efforts towards the expansion of higher education among the Bahujan Samaj, as well as towards the elimination of the evil of liquor and uncivilized practices of Holi.

I

Education

For training men and women for a socially useful and cultured way of life Shinde evolved a new system of education on the basis of his own experiences in India and abroad.

It is usually believed that a high standard of intelligence is needed for education, particularly for higher education. But V. R. Shinde believed that average intelligence accompanied by the feeling of sympathy, and appreciation of good things and beauty is important in acquiring good education.[1] The feeling of sympathy and the power of appreciation, Shinde says, he developed more in the company of his parents who did not make any discrimination in caste and culture and appreciated all the good things that they saw. Shinde, with great gratitude, mentioned that even though his teachers were not great scholars, it was their sympathetic treatment to him and their sincerity in imparting knowledge to the students, and their encouragement, that created interest in him for study of the subjects taught in the school.

Shinde found that the college education with big classes, lecture method and lack of direct individual contact between professors and students, made the college education dry and laborious for him.[2] The system of University examination based on competitive basis was simply strenuous for the student. Shinde himself suffered failure in Intermediate Arts and B. A. due to various factors such as lack of proper provision for his residence and study due to his own poverty, the lack of sympathy on the part of the teachers for students and their difficulties, lack of equipment for recreation and sports and library, monotony of reading the same books and lack of proper guidance. The entire situation of College education was such that Shinde compared it to a hot pan in the hands of the Deity Bel Marduk in Babylonia in which the Babylonians sacrificed their first-born children.[3]

During his stay in England, Shinde found that the system of education there was radically different from the one in India. In a village primary school in England, Shinde found the girls and boys were provided not only with free compulsory education, but also with stationary and books for their use. They were given knowledge of soap making, sugar-making, sericulture, gardening, making of match boxes, working of post-office, the mechanism of clock, safety lamp, small boats, wireless, etc. Only three teachers were managing the school of 150 students in seven classes and were imparting instructions to them mostly in groups. Shinde was very much impressed by the industrial bias and all round development of students in literary education as well as moral training, arts, music, physical training as well.[4] The Manchester College was an ideal place for study and development of one's own latent abilities.[5] It was a residential institute where there was a close relationship between the family members of the staff and the students. This was of considerable help to V. R. Shinde, and indeed, he could complete his studies only because of this congenial environment. This experience gave him an insight into the problem of education, especi-

ally of the students of lower classes who need greater sympathy.

On his return from England, Shinde, started the 'Depressed Classes Mission Society of India' and organised schools for the students from the depressed classes where he implemented his ideas of education. Here, he insisted on their literary attainments as well as moral training, spiritual uplift, training in certain industrial craft as book binding, carpentry, drawing, painting, tailoring, etc.[6] Shinde insisted that the Head, Heart, Hand and Health of the student all must be trained in a co-ordinated manner. Once this co-ordination is effected, it can be transferred to any activity which would make him a successful citizen throughout his life.

Shinde insisted on giving family affection to the students by way of their assocation with the teachers' families, easy approach to teachers, participation of common activities with the teachers' families by way of mass prayers, **Upasanas**, excursions, etc.

In this regard, reference may be made to Shinde's views on 'Vardha System of education'. Shinde stated that the vardha system of education was defective as it failed to give true education to students.[7] Vardha system of education was education for earning one's own bread. The true need of education from the view point of satisfying cultural needs is felt more after the bread is earned. Shinde considered that true education lay in making a person observe 'eight beatitudes of Christ',[8] that gave rules of morality, simplicity, conscientious behaviour, and proper attitude towards the society. Shinde believed that education could not be separated from training in the principles of liberal religion; when it was divorced from religion, it lost its power of building personality and character.

Shinde insisted that while educating the student in an institution due care must be taken that he is not removed from the atmosphere of affection, sympathy, restraint and morality. This can be very well achieved if

boys and girls freely associate with each other as brothers and sisters in the family. If their relationship is not sublimated through the channel of brotherly and sisterly affection, the boys and girls find out meeting places in restaurants and theatres, and they develop unnatural and socially vicious kind of relationship. The teacher's wife should give them the affection of the mother whom the children too, would like to serve. Shinde says, the teacher's wife may not be teacher herself. He even prefers her to be only the house-wife making her house overflow with affectionate care. Her affection should be extended to all students, particularly to those who need it. Shinde further insisted that the school should have not only male teachers but also female teachers, both of whom should have close contact with individual students.[9] It is only by this system of family atmosphere, which was a unique character of our ancient Guru Kula that students developed the attitude of brotherly and sisterly relations on social level. While receiving paternal care from the teachers, they repaid their respects to them, and consequently extended the same feeling to the elders in the society. It was by this process that "The School is turned into a family and the nation can be turned into an expanded family."[10]

Shinde insisted that residential schools, with teachers residing with them alone would create the proper atmosphere for education. It is here that the students forget social distinctions, and participate in common programme.

Shinde desired democratisation of education. He demanded that free universal primary education must be made compulsory to all. With this view, he started agitation in Bombay Province. In case of secondary education of the lower classes, he states that the Universities should have liberal attitude in giving recognition to their schools. They should not insist on well constructed buildings, a good library or well-equipped laboratory.[11] Shinde criticised the Bombay University for the lack of proper attitude towards women and backward classes. The University required that all the requirements of buildings, library

and laboratory must be fulfilled even by the charitable institutions run for the education of women and poor students, and the University put these institutions on par with the institutions run by and for the educationally advanced classes. Consequently education of women and backward classes in Bombay province could not make much progress. The Calcutta University, on the contrary, had very liberal attitude towards the institutions run by **Namashudras.** Shinde had seen how the **Namashudras** in Bengal achieved very rapid and extensive progress in education among them by constructing temporary sheds for their schools, collecting the equipment as it became available. In the case of medium of instruction. Shinde insisted on the mother-tongue as the medium of instruction even at the University level as it helped understanding the subject easily.[12] He deemed the study of sanskrit essential for the student to gain an idea of the literary and philosophical achievements of the Indian people.[13] He also pleaded for the knowledge of an additional important foreign language to know the recent advances in civilization.

Thus, Shinde aimed at achieving the freedom of students from superstitious religion, and from the tyranny of prevalent political, social and economic institutions. He prepared them to meet the needs of the industrial age, and to lead to social and decent life of co-operation and social integration, and to appreciate beauty wherever they found it. Through this system of education, Shinde aimed at creating a casteless society organised on principles of liberal religion. He wanted to make the education work-oriented, and to help the students to be self-sufficient.

V. R. Shinde's insistence on casteless-**Gurukula** type of education, with emphasis on industrial bias, and dignity of labour, self-sufficiency and self-respect was watched by Bhaurao Patil,[14] who himself had not passed even the 10th standard examination. Bhaurao Patil received the inspiration for expansian of education from V. R. Shinde and Shahu Maharaj, and organised hostels where students from

all castes — high and low; rich and poor, were admitted. The students were treated on the basis of equality of all to such an extent that they were never required to mention their caste-identity anywhere, neither in class-room, nor in kitchen. He conducted schools, training colleges, and other colleges whose buildings were built by the voluntary labour of students and teachers. The schools were attached to hostels and hostels were located in farms, where the students were provided with 'earn and learn scheme'. The training colleges became the chief source of the teachers who satisfied Shinde's ideas about the ideal teachers. The teachers along with their families took care of the emotional, social and economic needs of their students. The Institutes flourished as a big cluster of various branches from Kindergarten schools, primary schools, high-schools, training colleges, Arts colleges, Science colleges and Commerce colleges. Bhaurao, the centre of this activity, was collecting funds from various sources such as Mill-labourers, owners of small industrial concerns, and cultivators, who themselves were not much educated. For the consolidation of the institution of **'Rayat Shikshana Sanstha'**, Bhaurao Patil organised the body of Life-members. When the first batch of twelve life-members was to take the oath, the ceremony was arranged in the house of V. R. Shinde on 24 October, 1937,[15] in order to get his blessings for the life-members and the institution. By this ceremony, Bhaurao expressed his gratitude to Shinde from whose example, he received the inspiration. Bhaurao's Rayat Shikshan Sanstha organised schools in the rural areas, and by providing proper education to the students there, created a new generation of leaders from **Bahujan Samaj.** They worked in various national, cultural, social and economic activities for the betterment of the **Bahujan Samaj.**

Prohibition

Shinde participated in the picketing of liquor shops along with **Lokamanya Tilak** and **Shankarrao Lavate** since 1907.[16] He also joined the prohibition campaign

organised by Gandhiji as a part of the non-cooperation movement in 1921.[17] However, Shinde's joining the movement had its own special features. Shinde studied the problem, its origin, its nature, and its consequences with reference to present conditions. Shinde considered the problem of liquor-addiction as a social evil and did not wish to treat it as a political problem. He desired that for solving this problem all the parties, the government, the National Congress and the people should co-operate. In his research, Shinde found, that the use of liquor in pre-British times was not very common. Generally, when liquor was made, it was made for private use and not for public sale. The makers of the liquor **(kalal)** were treated as untouchables by the people,[18] while in British times, Shinde found, that liqour-dealers were awarded honorific titles. Their business was so widely spread that one of them had the business spread in Bombay, Gwalior, Bhopal, Ratnagiri, Kolhapur, Sholapur, Hyderabad, Nagapur, Kulaba, Thane, etc., and had invested more than Rs. 20 lakhs in it.[19]

Shinde also found out that the British Government encouraged liquor-makers to make and sell liquor to the people to develop addiction to it among them, with a view to developing a new source of income from the liquor tax. The liquor shops were opened mainly near the textile-mills, industrial areas and labour colonies, where it was easy to attract customers. Liquor, no doubt, gave temporarily soothing effect to the tired body, but along with it, it benumbed his brain and made the drunkard more aggressive. It was because of these factors that criminal tendencies, particularly in the labour areas, increased considerably. In his writings and speeches, Shinde threw light on this situation.

In one of his famous lectures on the topic **"Darucha Vyapar, Sarakar, Ani Bahujan Samaj"** delivered in 'Vasant Vyakhyan Mala, Poona', Shinde showed how the government was getting a big revenue from the liquor tax, and that this income was only a little less than the income

from land-revenue. The income from liquor tax was Rs. 42,450,000 while income from land-tax was Rs. 58,128,000. Shinde also stated how the addiction to liquor was increasing among the people. Within ten years, the sale of liquor in the city of Bombay and Thane district increased in total by Rs. 140,000 gallons, while only in Kulaba district it increased by 25,000 gallons. Shinde also stated how the criminal tendency due to liquor addiction had increased, resulting into 1208 criminal cases in Poona district and 38 cases in Kulaba district in the year 1919-1920.[20]

Shinde stated how this liquor policy of Government was contrary to the government's claim that it was a trustee of the masses. It was quite certain that certain castes in the Bahujan Samaj were so backward that they would not accept any reform unless they were compelled to do so. The government followed a double standard policy: on the one hand, it was encouraging the liquor-shops to sell liquor, on the other, it was blaming the social workers for their inability to control people's addiction to liquor.

V. R. Shinde also threw light on the character of the Government as to how the British Government harassed by Nationalist Movement to stop the sale of liquor, put the income from liquor tax with the item of education in the list of the transferred Departments of the Dyarchic system of Government introduced in 1919. Consequently, this situation put the ministers on the horns of a dilemma as to whether they should choose prohibition policy at the cost of expansion of education.[21] If they chose prohibition policy, they were required to arrange for collecting that much amount from some other source.

Shinde came to the conclusion that though liquor-tax is essential as a source of finance for the government, the government must sacrifice the income from the liquor-tax, because addiction to liquor was destruction of the social and economic welfare of the Bahujan Samaj.

Thus, Shinde enlightened the people in the complexity of the liquor policy followed by the Government and encouraged the people to self-help in the matter.

Holi Celebration

In case of holi-celebrations, Shinde started a movement for stopping traditional evil practices which had become a part and parcel of the celebration. Shinde achieved considerable success in this movement which he conducted on the basis of his knowledge of psychology and sociology.

The evil practices of **'holee'** as that of drinking liquor, besmearing the body with ashes, and going around the town loudly abusing anybody who may be seen or unseen and making a repugnant noise continuously along with these nasty activities, were not the practices of a true religion. However, the celebration of **holee** in the above manner was a very deep-rooted practice among the lower classes. Shinde, who himself had participated in such practices at Jamkhindi, understood the repulsive nature of these practices. With a view to put an end to these practices, Shinde launched a movement in the labour colony near Globe Mill in 1907. On the day of **holee**, Shinde held a big meeting of the labourers under the presidentship of Bhalchandra Krishna Bhatavadekar,[22] and organised decent entertainment programmes as a substitute for the nasty practices of holee. The movement became very popular, and it was carried on afterwards by the "Servants of India Society", by founding a special organisation — 'Social Service League' — for the purpose. From 1911 onwards, holee-gathering with dramas, **kirtans**, lectures, and mimicry became a common feature in the labour areas.[23] When Shinde went to Poona in 1913, he started the holi-reform campaign in the city, by holding a big meeting in Kirloskar Theatre under the presidentship of Balasaheb Pant Pratinidhi. To spread the movement in the village areas as well, Shinde persuaded the Director of Public Instruction to send directives to headmasters of schools to celebrate the holee festival in

the schools by organising entertainment programmes as dramas, sports and contests.[24]

Whenever Shinde saw humanity suffering knowingly or unknowingly, he rushed to their help. When the famine-stricken Mangs from Ahmednagar, about 1000 in number, sought shelter in the open-ground near 'Depressed Classes Mission' in Poona in 1920-21, Shinde rushed to their help.[25] He appealed to the President of Poona Municipality to found a Famine Relief Committee for them and collected help for them in six centres that were opened in Poona city.

The Collector of Poona district agreed to distribute doles to them twice a week. The newsmen of the Bombay Chronicle and Associated Press, as well as Sheth L. R. Teresy visited the camp of these people and secured help from Bombay. However, Shinde was not satisfied with this free help. In a short time he started a workshop of rope — making, and thus providing the people with work, he made them self-sufficient. For famine-relief work, Shinde built round himself a big group of medical practitioners to assist him in the relief-work. He invited heads of social institutions as Miss Fielding, Smt. Warubai Shevade of Hingne, and Smt. Sunderabai Thakar to help the famine-relief work. Pune Somavamshiya Samaj, Deccan Bharat Volunteers, and a number of social workers as S. M. Mate, Baburao Jedhe, S. C. Darandale, V. R. Gadre, B. D. Waydande, Gawade, etc. also joined hands with Shinde in the relief operations.

In the influenza epidemic at Poona of 1918, Shinde and his family members rendered service to the sick people. He and his sister Janakka brought the influenza mixtures from the Poona Municipality and distributed it from door to door.[26]

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Chapter VI

IN THE SERVICE OF WOMEN

V. R. Shinde was always moving from one area to another on his missionary work. This gave him an opportunity to make a comparative study of the conditions of women in India. He was also acquainted with the condition of women in England. So, he found that the status of women in India was very low, and she was a victim of numerous evil customs, superstitions and prejudices. Shinde felt that unless the condition of women in society was improved there could be no social progress. Indeed, Shinde believed that progress of women was basic to all progress. Therefore, he fought against some evil practices and introduced some measures that could bring equal status to women.

By the end of the 19th century reformers like Agarkar, Justice Ranade, and Karve, thought of emancipation of women. Their efforts were confined to women of the middle and higher classes. Mahatma Phule gave some thought to education of women of the lower castes. The reformists advocated that primary education should be given to girls of all castes. It was due to their efforts that child-marriage was banned. However, all these reforms did not reach the women of lower castes and particularly in the rural areas.

Shinde believed that if education was given to girls of lower classes they would release themselves from the shackles of superstition and slavery. They would also improve their families and bring about a general elevation of their class to higher culture. He educated his sister Janakka, and thereby, enabled her to lead a life of inde-

pendence, and render useful service to society. When Shinde opened Depressed Classes Mission Society, he took special efforts to uplift the condition of women of the Depressed Classes by looking after their material and moral progress.

I

Primary Education for Girls

Shinde rendered very important service in initiating and spreading the demand for compulsory primary education for girls. In 1918, Vitthalbhai J. Patel got "The Bombay Primary Education District Municipalities Act' passed and allowed the Municipalities to introduce compulsory primary education in their areas if they wished to do so. Poona Municipality took up for discussion the resolution of compulsory primary education for boys in its area in 1919.[1] V. R. Shinde demanded that the provision of compulsory primary education should be extended to girls as well. The Act had allowed free education to the students whose parents made the declaration of their inability to pay the fees. It also had the clause of penalisation in case of failure of parents to send their children to school.

The provision of the finance for the compulsory primary education required the Municipality and the Government to share half of the expenses each. Female education was previously urged by Jyotiba Phule and had been taken up even by the revived Satyashodhak movement. V. R. Shinde's demand for extending the compulsory primary education to girls was in keeping with the reform movement of **Satyashodhak.** It came to be supported by the non-Brahmans particularly the young men and they joined the movement very enthusiastically. Keshavrao Jedhe, Ramrao Barge, Shankarrao Chavan, Dinkarrao Mane, Dinkarrao Palkar, Gopinathrao Palkar, Bapusaheb Nalawade and Shripatrao Shinde took lead in carrying on propaganda for compulsory primary education also for girls.[2] Ramabai Ranade, the wife of Justice

Ranade, and Kamalabai Deshpande also supported the demand.[3] Tilak's followers were opposed to all such liberal reforms and opposed this agitation also. It was their practice that whenever it was difficult for them to raise any opposition on the point of principle, they raised the bugbear of practical difficulties in it. They argued that the provision of finance would fall short if girls' education was included in the scheme.[4]

As the 'Kesari' group insisted on opposition to the reform, Shinde organised a demonstration by women in front of the municipal building at Reay Market when the General Body Meeting of the Municipality was held. The procession of high caste women started from Seva Sadan and that of lower castes from the Depressed Classes Mission Society. They demanded that the General Body Meeting be adjourned.[5] They succeeded.

When the Rajwade Committee which was appointed to examine the problem of finance, gave a favourable opinion, thus removing the main hurdle in extending the scheme to girls, the Tilakite party raised another obstacle. It decided to hold a public meeting at Kirloskar Theatre to find out the consensus of public opinion which, it believed, would condemn this innovation. It was presided by Shankarrao Bhagwat, the Chief Officer of the Municipality. R. P. Paranjape, N. C. Kelkar, V. R. Shinde, Kamalabai Desphpande and Shripatrao Shinde attended the meeting and participated in the discussion. Lokamanya Tilak, who was in convalescent stage at Simhagad, was brought for the meeting. Kamalabai Deshpande, in her speech, refuted the aguments made by her father, N. C. Kelkar. In his speech, V. R. Shinde expressed his opposition to Tilak's participation in the meeting.[6] However, when Tilak stood up for making his speech, he was attacked with rotten eggs by the resentful mob. V. R. Shinde and his son, Prataprao Shinde gave protection to Tilak and removed him to a safe place, when the protests grew fierce. The meeting enthusiastically supported the cause of girl's education.

Afterwards, Shinde conducted a vigorous movement demanding provision of compulsory free primary education for girls by other Municipalities in Maharashtra. He also wrote a series of articles in **Jnanaprakash** refuting the arguments of the orthodox section and criticising particulary the attitude of Lokamanya Tilak.[7]

As a result of this movement R. P. Paranjape, when he became the Education Minister of Bombay Province in 1921, passed "The Act to provide for compulsory elementary education and to make better provision for the management and control of primary education in the Bombay Presidency" on 10th December, 1922. This Act compelled the Municipalities to introduce compulsory elementary education in their areas.[8]

Though this act provided for free and compulsory education for both the boys and the girls its application was limited to urban areas only. V. R. Shinde and his followers pointed out that 16,000 villages out of the 26,000 villages of the then Bombay Province had no schools.[9] The Act did not compel the government to take measures in this regard. So, V. R. Shinde started a movement for securing primary edcuation to children in rural areas. He warned the government that if the government did not provide suitable facilities, the villagers would stop paying land-revenue.

Thus, V.R. Shinde laid down the lines for an organised movement in the cause of education and his followers continued it.

II

Agitation against the Practice of Devadasi

Of all the evil customs of the Hindus, perhaps, the most damaging was that of the **Devadasi** or **Murali**, practised mostly by the lower castes as Kunbi, Dhangar, Koli, Naik Bedar, Dasar, Kabaligar, Talawar, Mahar and Mangs. The boys and girls, who were thus dedicated to the service of a certain deity were prohibited from marriage and family-life. This practice resulted in debauchery, pro-

stitution and general degeneration of the society. However, none of the parties — the children, the parents, the society and government felt the horror of the practice, nor did they know how widespread the practice was.

When the District Magistrate of Poona was approached by some gentlemen requesting him to stop the practice of **Murali** at the Khandoba temple, the magistrate sent a reply stating, "The practice of **Murali** will be minimised with the spread of education. However, as the spread of education among the lower classes is very slow, the practice of **Murali** too, will be minimised very slowly". He further added, "The practice is only among the lower classes, and that too, around the temples of Khandoba and such other deities. So the custom is not so widespread that the Government should resort to any strong measures against it". V. R. Shinde, who very much felt the injustice to the victims of the practice of **Murali**, was making efforts for saving such girls individually since his early career. In 1893, when he was still at college, he started, during vacations, teaching reading and writing to one such girl, who was dedicated as **Murali**. Shinde's mother treated the girl with consideration and kindness. Vitthalrao's efforts were successful as the girl afterwards became a teacher in the school for untouchable girls in Jamkhindi.[10] Another such girl was seen by Shinde when he visited Jamkhindi as a missionary of Prarthana Samaj. At Jamkhindi, in addition to defying caste-distinctions by giving food to a Brahman, Shivarampant Gokhale, Shinde interfered by preventing a Mahar girl from becoming a professional **Murali**. The girl, barely ten years old, was attending a primary school. Shinde urged her parents to make provision for her further education and not to allow her to be a professional Murali in the sense that she should go from house to house begging, and lead a debaucherous life. The people in Jamkhindi expected the Shinde family to take leadership in implementing the time-honoured prevalent traditions and not in destroying them. They were perturbed to see that Vitthalrao was not only advocating reforms but was also implementing

them. A primary school-teacher in Jamkhindi took lead in leading the people to humiliate the Shinde family. They locked Shivarmpant Gokhale in a public latrine. Taking advantage of the holee celebrations, they used foul language to insult Shinde family and attacked their house with stones and filth. As their conduct become intolerable, Ramjibaba Shinde called police to take protection. Ultimately Shinde's interest in the reform of **Murali** led to Ramjibaba leaving Jamkhindi permanently, in spite of his age-old affectionate connection with his friends and relations there.[11] But this incident did not deter Shinde in continuing his efforts to improve the condition of these unfortunate women. In Bombay, he continued delivering speeches and writing articles on this topic and created an enthusiasm among the reformists for the reform of **Murali**.

In 1907, V. R. Shinde along with the Bishop of Bombay, N. G. Chandavarkar, G. K. Parekh, Bhalchandra Krishna, Principal R. H. Wilkinson, Mackikan and B. N. Bhajekar founded the "Society for protecting children in Western India" from their victimisation in the practice of 'Devadasi'. Shinde, Principal Wilkinson and Bhajekar were its secretaries.[12] Shinde started a very vigorous propaganda against the practice of Devadasi through lectures and writings. In his article '**Murali**' that was published in the magazine '**Purity Servant**' Vitthalrao pointed out how the practice of dedicating boys and girls to deities was a widespread one. He mentioned the varieties of epithets given to these girls: Murali, Jogavin, Bhavin, Nayakin, Kalavantin, Basavi, Devadasi, Devali, Jogati, Matangi, and Sharani dedicated to the deities Khandoba, Ambabai, Ravalnath, Bhutanath, Mahabaleshwar, Dareshwar, Gutyamma, Yellamma, Durgavva Dyamavva, and Maruti respectively. He showed that the practice was widely spread in the areas of Poona, Kolhapur, Hyderabad; Konkan, Karwar, Belgaum, Bellari and Gadag. Boys dedicated to Khandoba, Ambabai, Dyamava, and Yellamma were called Waghya, Aradhya, Potaraja and Jogappa respectively. Shinde argued that pros-

titution and Devadasi were complementary to each other. Many of the prostitutes who wanted to win a respectable position turned themselves into Davadasi. V. R. Shinde refuted the argument of the District Magistrate of Poona by showing that though the number of **Murali** had fallen down in ten years (1891-1901) the number of prostitutes had increased by 50 per cent certainly. It was bound to affect the health and morality of all sections of society.

Shinde stated that though the Government of India had made provision of putting restrictions on this practice by the Articles 372 and 373 in the Penal Code, the articles had remained a dead letter.

"The Society for protecting Children" aimed at protecting such dedicated children against the damage of their normal life. Two inspectors were appointed to keep vigorous watch over such cases and the victimised boys and girls were brought and kept in the orphanages at Pandharpur, Dhulia, Ahmedabad, and Lady North Cote orphanage at Bombay. Care was taken that they were not converted to any other religion.

In Poona, Shinde got the co-operation of Harold H. Mann, Shripatrao Thorat and S. J. Kamble in organising protest against the practice of Devadasi.[13] At Jejuri, a meeting was held in the very festival of Khandoba to protest against this practice. It created a commotion among the Mahars and Mangs among whom the practice of Murali was very much prevalent. V. R. Shinde and Shivaram J. Kamble advocated that if the girls who were dedicated as **Murali** got married, the practice would lose its severity. To implement this idea into practice they started making efforts for the rehabilitation of **Muralis** as married wives. V. R. Shinde and S. J. Kamble successfully conducted the marriage of a widower Ganapatrao Hanumantrao Gayakwad with a **Murali.** Some Mahars who did not like this kind of interference in their religion decided to murder Shinde. After the marriage ceremony, when Shinde was returning to Poona, they decided to catch hold of him on the Holkar bridge. Though Shinde

had no knowledge of this plan, he fortunately changed his route of return journey and went via Bund-Garden.[14] Shinde's perseverance in this effort was put to severe test, when Harold H. Mann brought a minor **Murali** who suffered from veneral disease and still addicted to the practice of prostitution and was unwilling to come to the institution. No public orphanage would accept this girl. V. R. Shinde's sister Janakka offered her service to live with the girl in a separate room. She gave her nursing and persuaded her to take education. The girl was cured of her physical and mental derangement and afterwards married to a soldier at Hyderabad. She became finally a trained nurse.[15]

Thus, V. R. Shinde, the pioneer reformer to abolish the practice of **Murali** also showed the way for rehabilitation of the **Murali.** The difficulties in this case came from three directions. The victims themselves were quite innocent and ignorant. They were not aware that by their dedication as **Murali,** they were being deprived of a general human right to get a respectable marriage and normal family life. They had confidence more in their parents than in the reformer. The guardians of the **Murali** considered dedication of **Murali** as a religious rite. Some of them were happy to see the financial advantage which they would be getting by the prostitution of **Murali,** and opposed the reform. The institution of the temple utilised the service of **Murali** and waghya not only for religious ritual but also for entertaining the people by their entertainment programme at the time of the ceremonial fair of the deity. Overcoming this hurdle of three-fold opposition, Shinde's efforts for the reform of **Murali** started fructifying, when Shinde succeeded in collecting a band of young men from the same lower castes to fight against the practice of Murali. Working on the suggestions given by this movement, the Bombay government passed the law prohibiting the practice of **Murali** on 15th October, 1934. "The act to protect Devadasis and to prevent dedication of women to Hindu deities, idols, objects of worship, temples and religious institutions in

the State of Bombay", declared the ceremony of dedicating a woman as **Devadasi** with her consent or without consent, unlawful. It declared marriage of such women valid and children of such marriage legitimate. The Act further threatened persons who performed or permited or took part in the ceremony of dedication, with imprisonment for one year, or fine or both.[16]

Guruvarya B. G. Jagtap who attended the Kautumbika Upasana Mandala conducted by V. R. Shinde, pointed out that one important feature of Shinde's activities was the equality of treatment to men and women.[17] He brought about a great reform in the non-brahman society by compelling the men to bring their wives, daughters-in-law, sisters, daughters and others along with them to the meetings of the Mandal. These women, mostly uneducated, living behind the curtains, were persuaded by Shinde to sit along with men, and join the activities of Bhajan, Kirtan, excursion, lectures and inter-caste-dinners with men of high and low status on the basis of equality. Their children were not considered as an obstruction. On the contrary, Shinde himself showed fondness for the children. He took them on his lap, while he himself was conducting a Upasana or Kirtana. The men who were overbearing in the family were taught to respect their wives, and learn the ways of the cultured society. It was Shinde, who for the first time, elevated the position of women in social behaviour, in his philosophical discourses, in Kirtans and in family relationships. While discussing the position of women Shinde stated that their strength lies in forbearance while that of the men in activities. It is this forbearance of women, their tolerance, their service, and their sacrifice that makes the family life happy and free from conflict.[18] Shinde pointed out how the Indian male respected his own mother but inflicted humiliation on his sister, daughter and wife.[19] He added that one day those women also would be mothers of some men. Therefore, women in general must be respected for the virtues that

are inherent in them. and the service they unmistakably render to the society.

Shinde's Contribution

Thus, Shinde made significant contribution for improving the condition of women of the lower classes. He knew that unless certain compulsion by way of legislation was brought on them, these people would not send their girls to schools. Even legislation was not enough, because it was seldom enforced; therefore, the movement for persuading the people to give education to girls was necessary. In this effort, he very cleverly inspired the youths and the women of the lower castes themselves. In this effort, Shinde was opposed by "Hindu-Dharma Rachna," Society, and Tilak's followers. Greater opposition was from the elderly people in the non-Brahman castes. Though the **Satya Shodhak Tamashas** and other activities stressed the activity of overthrowing brahman dominance, they ignored other aspects of Jyotiba's reforms relating to women and untouchability.

Shinde not only instituted the reform of female education, but also pioneered the movement for the abolition of the practice of **Murali**, the most inhuman and irreligious practice conducted in the name of religion and God. The victimisation of girls and boys for the pleasure of the society was stopped by Shinde, who very bravely conducted the movement. Shinde's heart was pained to see the miserable condition of prostitutes. When Maharshi Karve paid a visit to V. R. Shinde, during his illness, Shinde asked him whether Karve would join him if he launched a movement for improving the condition of prostitutes.[29]

V. R. Shinde gave concrete suggestions and guidance as to how the position of women in the family and society of the lower classes can be elevated by the abolition of **pardah,** and by their free participation in the social and religious activity. Shinde gave a new enlightenment to the men of lower classes to revise their attitude to women. In this movement Shinde's efforts were rewarded when he

secured a good following from the non-Brahman youths, who continued Shinde's efforts. Afterwards, Shripatrao Shinde, through his newspaper **Vijayi Maratha**, continued the propaganda for these reforms, while Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil institutionalised the reforms by opening schools.

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Chapter VII

AMONG THE PEASANTS

V. R. Shinde's participation in the Peasant Movement was the continuation of his activities of 'Bahujan Paksha'. The Bahujan Paksha was the political party of economically and socially backward classes of which the peasant class was the most numerous one. The peasant movement of 1927-28 was launched as an agitation against the "Small Holdings Bill" and the 'Revenue Code Amendment Bill' that were brought before the Bombay Legislative Council in 1927. The Small Holding Bill aimed at abolishing small holdings of the poor cultivators and selling them to the owners of big landholdings. Had the bill been passed, it would have rendered thousands of peasants in Bombay Province landless labourers.

Shinde himself was born in a peasant family and had suffered miseries at the hands of the exacting money-lender, who charged heavy interest and ultimately gulped the house and the land of Shinde's parents.

When the Small Holdings Bill was introduced, Shinde had under his control a well established organisation of 'Tarun Maratha Mandal' at Poona. The Satyashodhak Samaj movement had caused awakening among the peasants in Nagar, Poona, Nasik and Satara. Shinde too, was visiting the villages in this area since 1925 for organising **Kautumbika Upasana Mandal** for uplifting the spiritual life in the rural areas. He was distressed to see the condition of the peasants in this area who were put to great hardships by the exactions of money-lenders and rentier landlords. **The Satya Shodhak Samaj** had already created an urge for education, and educated youths from villages were active in taking cognisance of the new changes, that

affected the rural life. **'The Tarun Maratha Mandal'**, a nationalist organisation, looked to V. R. Shinde, and Shripatrao Shinde for guidance. Keshavrao Jedhe, Dinakarrao Javalkar, Keshavrao Bagade, and Lad were the active workers who were ably supported by editors of 'Din Mitra', 'Rashtraveer', and "Vijayi Maratha'.

I

The Condition of Peasants in Maharashtra

The peasants who were required to pay the land revenue, the rent to the landlord, and interest to the money-lender were not shown any mercy by either the Government or the **rentier** landlords or capitalists or by the Non-Brahman party. The wealthy leaders of Non-Brahmans were interested more in getting seats in the Legislature than showing interest in the poor people's economic difficulties.

The Small Holdings Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council was the inevitable and natural result of the interaction of the policies followed by the British Government, the Indian Congress, and the non-Brahman Party in the Western India. The peasants in Western India were, in general, from the non-Brahman community and majority of them were kunbis. The peasant movement, in the sense of discontent against the prevailing system, made its appearance in Western India soon after the introduction of the colonial system by the British Government. The movement expressed itself in the form of Deccan Riots against land-grabbing by the money-lenders in 1875 A.D.[1] and against the exacting Rentier-landlords between 1919 to 1921.[2] However, the peasants, who were impressed by the British Government's introduction of Western innovations in India, and believed in their professions of the peasants' welfare, took a long time till 1928 to understand that the British Government was at the root of their miseries.

The indebtedness of the peasants was largely the result of the Governmental revenue policy, and the trade policy,[3] though, to some extent, the ancient laws of in-

heritance, the natural factors such as the failures of monsoon, the increasing population, and the peasants' ignorance of new economic set up, and his lack of thrifty habits[4] were responsible for the peasants' distress. The British bureaucracy saw the peasant losing his valuable possession of land gradually in pieces to the money-lender, for making payment of the revenue settlement of 1836, for making the payment for the Revised settlement of 1867 and 1879,[5] and for keeping himself alive. The government made effort to balance the situation by alternatively providing relief to the peasants and at the same time strengthening the hands of the money-lenders. Though 'The usury law of 1827' saved peasants' cattle and implements from seizure by the money-lenders,[6] the Government countered it by the Civil Procedure Code of 1859, according to which the peasant could be thrown in prison for non-payment of loan.[7] The Deccan Agriculturist Relief Act of 1879 proved inadequate to save the agriculturist from entering into debt which ultimately made him part with his land.[8] All this resulted into compulsion on the peasant to sell the land in pieces to the money-lender, or non-agriculturist buyer. The peasant satisfied himself with tenancy for which there was no legal recognition and no legal protection.[9] The fragmentation of the landholding upset the British bureaucracy considerably, as it caused the collection of land revenue more complicated. In 1916, Keatings, the Director of Agriculture of Bomby Presidency, intended to abolish small-holding by legislation. His hands were held back by the governmental opposition[10] as the government did not wish to incur the displeasure of the numerous peasants in the midst of war and home-rule agitation. However, in 1926, Bombay Government felt itself strong enough to bring in the bill for the abolition of small-holdings, throwing the peasant in unemployment.

The Indian Congress which professed to plead the case of the exploited, nay start agitation against injustice, were not aware of the miseries of the peasantry. The moderates consisting of businessmen, land-lords and intelligentsia, who in fact, formed the commercial bourgeoise in the words of Gail Omvedt,[11] professed the cause

of all-round reform—socio-religo-economic and political-in India. They considered all this reform to be the monopoly of the upper classes. The enthusiasm of the moderates, led by Vaikunthlal Mehta, Vithaldas Thackersey, Lallubhai Samaldas and Chimanlal Mehta reached its peak when they undertook to finance the agriculturist in Bombay Presidency by organising the Central Co-operative Bank as a part of their Swadeshi Movement,[12] in 1912. Like all financial institutions of this kind, this bank began to look after the security of its loans rather than to the needs and welfare of the poor cultivators. Consequently the bank decided to give loans only to the rich peasants who could mortgage some movable property with it.[13] By 1921, the Liberals separated themselves from the National Congress and secured the Legislative council seats, and ministerships administering Transferred Departments. The Liberal ministers, unmindful of the distress of the lower classes, tried to strengthen their position by following policies generally in favour of businessmen and landlords and such other vested interests.

As for the relations between the Extremists and the peasants, the Extremists led by Tilak, had incurred the displeasure of the non-Brahmans by their professions of claims of social supremacy,[14] and met with serious challenge made by the Satyashodhak Movement from 1911 onwards.[15] The Brahmans, as a class of priests, governmental officers, Extremists led by Tilak and rentier landlords, stood condemned by the non-Brahman community. The rentier land-lords who had generally big pieces of land had no fear from the Small Holdings Bill. However, the Revision Settlement of 1924 made heavy demands upon them.[16] So they felt the need for joining the agitation of non-Brahman peasants; but they were not in a position to obtain relief easily. The Swarajists were having a few members from them to plead the cause of rentier landlords against Revision Settlement in the Bombay Legislative Council.

The peasants could not place their confidence in the non-co-operators led by Gandhiji, as the social and religious ideas of Gandhiji differed from those of Satyasho-

dhak Movement.[17] Nor could Gandhiji, a prophet professing unity of all classes for the cause of the national movement, tolerate the coercive and violent measures employed by the suffering peasantry against the exactions of the money-lenders and land-lords.[18] However, the struggle of the peasants in Bardoli led by Vallabhbhai Patel under the guidance of Gandhiji in 1928, was proving as inspiring instance for the peasants in Western India.[19]

The Peasant-Movement of 1920s was a forsaken child of the non-Brahman Satyashodhak Movement. The founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj, Mahatma Phule, had shown awareness of the miseries and problems of the poor cultivators, and also justified their grievances in the "Deccan Riots of 1875" through his writings in 'Dinabandhu'.[20] The revived Satyashodhak non-Brahman Movement, concentrated on the socio-religious aspect and won a notable success in its political ambitions in the new Constitution of Montford Reforms of 1919.[21] The elected leaders of the non-Brahman party remained loyal more to the British Government than to Satyashodhak ideology. The peasants in the Deccan, groaning under the heavy exactions of rent to the extent of 3|4th, 4|5th and even 200 per cent of the produce by the rentier landlord, demanded reduction of the rent to 1|2 of the produce and started agitation against the rentier land-lords in 1919. As the movement, that spread in the five talukas of Satara district and also in Sholapur district[22] did not get essential organisation and effective guidance from the professed leaders of the non-Brahman party, the peasants resorted to violence in 1920 and suffered its consequences.[23] The upper-class non-Brahmans opposed the movement as it clashed with their interests as landlords.[24] The government ignored the movement as they felt secure in the loyalty of the non-Brahman leaders.[25] Nor could the movement secure help from the Communist Party,[26] as it concentrated on urban labour, nor from the Congress that consistently drew a line at movements against the British Government and the movement against Indian landlords.[27] However, this agitation of 1920 strengthened the unity of the peasants and brought about an awakening among them.[28]

II

In 1928, to avert the calamity of Small-Holdings Bill. Shinde came forward to assume the leadership of the cause of the peasants in this critical moment.

The Bill was being worked out by Sir Chunilal Mehta for the last five years,[29] before it was actually presented in the Bombay Legislative Council on 8th October, 1927. The bill was published in June, 1927, but its representation was postponed till next session.[30] Opposition to the bill was developing in the co-operative department,[31] particularly in the lower staff recruited from the peasantry. They were alarmed at the provisions of the Bill. The co-operative societies started making inquiries about the Bill, and were discussing it in the villages.[32] The non-Brahman leadership of the upper-class society had bound itself to the government as loyalists. The new rising leadership of Keshavrao Jedhe, Dinkarrao Jawalkar, Bhaurao Patil, Keshavrao Vichare, Sambhaji Patil (a Satyashodhak in co-operative department), Rambhau Ghatge and Shankarrao Bogar (both Tamasha workers), were men of great energy and virulence.[33] They pleaded with Shinde to help them save the small-holding peasantry. Shinde joned hands with them[34] in addressing the meetings. In November 1927, a committee of non-Brahman leaders of Satara was set up. Taluka meetings were held at Wai, Karad, Valva, Koregaon and these were followed by 'Satara District Peasants Conference', which was presided over by N. E. Navale, the political leader and the member of the Bombay Legislative Council from Ahmednagar.[35] N. E. Navale, though he privately felt that the Bill would have good results, was forced by peasant pressure to take part in the agitation against it.[36] Large meetings were also held in Poona and Ahmednagar Districts.[37]

The Nationalist Brahmans as well, started their agitation mostly against the impending increase in land-tax and held a number of meetings at various places.[38] When the problem of choosing the President for the Provincial Conference arose, V. R. Shinde's name was hailed by all. Shinde was a veteran of several movements and it was

felt that he could guide this one also to success. He was respected by the government and was capable of bringing together various groups, particularly the non-Brahmans and the Nationalists.[39] So all the leaders urged him to assume the responsibility of guiding the Bombay Presidency Peasants Conference, even though he was in a hurry to leave Poona to attend Brahmo festival in Bengal.[40] Shinde accepted the offer and led the movement very systematically.

III

The two Bills which the Bombay government presented to the Bombay Legislative Council in September, 1927, were the 'Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill' (Bill No. II of 1927—A Bill to amend the Bombay Land Revenue Ccde, 1879), and the Small Holdings Bill, (Bill No. XVI of 1927). (A Bill to prevent the excessive sub-division of Agricultural land and promote the consolidation of such land).[41] They were sanctioned by the Indian Govt. and Bombay Govt. as well.[42]

The Land Revenue Code Amendment Bill aimed at Land Revenue Revision Settlement which was to implement the recommendations of the Land Revenue Assessment Committee appointed in 1924. The Committee revised (i) the method of valuation, and (ii) the rates of assessment. In addition to the actual produce in the land, the committee advised the government to take into consideration factors such as proximity to the market, the trend of prices, and the real rent paid to the landlord, while deciding the valuation.[43] The government was allowed to collect 25 per cent of the cultivation profit. The immediate misery inflicted by the Committee was the enhancement of assessment. The originally assessed amount which was considered 1|6th of the produce in 1836, was enhanced in 1867 by 54 per cent. The Revenue Code Act of 1879 had legalised the enhancement of 100 per cent in individual holding, 66 per cent in a village, and 33 per cent in a taluka, leaving the assessment to the discretion of the Survey Officer, freely.[44] The committee allowed 25 per cent enhancement on the

top of it. The Land Revenue Assessment Committee of 1924, further recommended that the Second Revision Settlement should be completed in all villages and talukas, and the recommendation of the Committee were to be made applicable over and above it.[45] By 1926, the reports for revision of settlement from various talukas were received and new rates of assessment were to be introduced from 1925-26 and tax to be levied from 1926-27.[46]

The Bill of Land Revenue Code Amendment had been introduced in the Legislative Council in the February session, when it was published.[47] Resolutions that the Land Revenue Revision Settlement should be entirely suspended till the principles of Revision Settlement were put on a statutory basis by the amendment of Land Revenue Code, and that no fresh revision settlement should be introduced any where in Bombay Presidency, were forwarded by some Council members like H. B. Shivadasani.[48] The first reading of the Bill (Bill No. II of 1927, A Bill to amend the Bombay Revenue Code of 1879), was to be done cn 8th October, 1927, before the Small Holdings Bill was presented.[49] However, the Honourable J. L. Rieu announced that the government did not intend to proceed with the Bill,[50] and the introduction of the Bill was further postponed.

The Bill of 'Small Holdings', (Bill No. XVI of 1927 A bill to prevent the excessive Sub-division of Agricultural Land and to promote consolidation of such land) was presented to the Bombay Legislative Council by the Hon'ble Sir Chunilal mehta, the Minister for Agriculture and Co-operation on 8th October, 1927. The Bill consisted of two parts:[51] (i) The proposal to prevent further sub-division and fragmentation; (ii) the second part intended to consolidate fragmented holding in certain selected and specialised villages. The object of the Bill was to remedy evils due to excessive sub-division and fragmentation of agricultural land. Chunilal Mehta stressed the importance of legislation over voluntary co-operative consolidation. He also asserted that the Bill respected the Law of Inheritance prevalent in the country. He stressed the defects in the Rayatwari System of Small

Holdings such as lack of capital for improvement of the land, the indebtendness of the cultivator, and the fragmented land-holdings. Still he maintained that the bill was no attempt to create big Zamindars. He took shelter behind the false principle that in framing land-policy, the good of the state, rather than that of private individuals should be the guiding principle. The Bill required the small land-holder to sell his uneconomic small-holdings to his neighbour; Chunilal Mehta maintained that this would result into prosperity and not unemployment for the peasants, who were deprived of their land.

Chunilal Mehta's lengthy speech on the necessity and importance of legislation in the matter was well received by all sections in the Council, who cheered him on concluding his speech.[52] Most of the members gave general consent to the principle of the Bill and on its first reading the Bill was referred to the Select Committee.[53]

The Small Holdings Bill excited great commotion among the peasants in the Bombay Presidency. When the peasants were properly roused, the Bombay Presidency peasants' conference was held at Reay Market in Poona on 25th July, 1928 with V. R. Shinde as the President and Baburao Jedhe as Vice-President. The Conference was attended by the followers of various parties, and the peasants about 5,000 in number from the districts in Maharashtra and Karnataka.[54] The Conference brought the followers of different parties mainly non-Brahman and Swarajists, on one and the same platform.

Karmaveer Shinde's speech at the Bombay Presidency Peasants Conference, was like a stormy wind stripping the Liberals and the British Government of their hypocrisies.

Shinde criticised the Indian Ministers of the Dyarchic government who had become a part and parcel of the British bureaucratic administrative machinery. Shinde said, "The British bureaucracy pretends to be the trustees of the Indian subjects. The leaders of the people who have occupied the ministerial chairs have joined hands with the British bureaucracy in exploiting the people

whom they represent."[55] Shinde pointed out the real causes of the indebtedness of the peasantry.[56]

Referring to the corrupt survey officers from clerks, Kulkarnis to the Deputy Collectors and Commissioners, the non-agriculturist, money-lenders and white-collar middle class who had deprived the peasant of his land and had caused fragmentation,[57] Shinde pointed out that "small peasant proprietorship can attain prosperity as is the case with cultivators in France and Holland."[58] He said, that "science of economics insists upon not merely the advantages of large production but also equitable and just distribution of wealth among the people. It is also important from the point of view of the well-being of the nation."[59] Chunilal Mehta's insistence that the land policy was to be framed mainly by the considerations of advantages to the government was contradicted by him by pointing out the problem of the advantage for the nation. Referring to the problem of abolition of unprofitable holdings, Shinde pointed out, that though the number of land-holdings below that of 5 acres was a big one, the number of holdings between 100 to 500 acres and even above that of 500 acres was also considerably big. "The government may abolish the small holdings, but they should also make provision for giving land to the peasant who was deprived of his land, from the big pieces of land held by big land-holders."[60] This kind of re-adjustment and consolidation, he pointed out, could be done with the help of co-operative societies and Local Boards in an amicable manner. Referring to the Bill of increasing the land-tax, Shinde pointed out, that the government was growing bankrupt by financing the schemes of Sukkur Barrage in Sind and the Backbay Development in Bombay, and intended to collect money by depriving the starving Peter to finance the Paul. He rightly alleged that the Small Holdings Bill and the increased assessment were being passed with the view of handing over land to big Jamindars and to collect large amount of taxes from them.[61] Shinde also pointed out, how the Bill was intended to benefit the

mill-owners, who were threatened by strikes of mill-workers, as these mill-workers owned small pieces of land tc fall back upon. "The government intends to make the workers helpless as is the case with the working class in England", said Shinde.

Thus, pointing out the conspiracy among the government, the Jamindars and the mill-owners, Shinde threatened the government that if the government did not withdraw the bills, the peasants would have to follow the example of Bardoli Satyagraha.[62]

In the Conference, Shinde urged the leaders of the movement to establish a permanent committee to continue the work of the movement.[63] He told them, "If need arises, the peasants will have to start **Satyagraha**, which will need very elaborate and strong organisation. This Satyagraha will be non-violent and will have to be conducted under the gudance of Mahatma Gandhi, and not according to the principles of Geeta". At the end of this Conference, Shinde led a procession of about 1,000 peasants to the Council Hall to present a petition protesting against the Small Holdings Bill and the Revision Settlement of Land Revenue to the President of the Council. When the procession reached the Council Hall, a meeting was held. N. C. Kelkar addressed the meeting and the petition was presented to the President of the Council.[64] The procession was conducted in a very disciplined and peaceful manner.

The Bill of Small Holdings was withdrawn by the government. One of the causes of the withdrawal of the Bill was certainly the well organised movement of the peasants. There were other causes as well. The Bombay government had been advised by the Royal Commission to observe a 'guarded policy' in the case of the Small Holdings Bill. The Commission had pointed out the possibility of the rise of a proletariat class of numerous landless agricultural labourers. There was a possibility that this proletariat class may strengthen the Gandhian Movement and Leadership. The lesson of Russian Revolution was also to be taken into consideration.

V

Shinde continued the work of organising and awakening peasants and kept the peasant movement active through meetings, conferences and constructive programmes.

After the Conference was over, Shinde went to Calcutta to attend the festival of Brahmo Samaj centenary. On his way to Calcutta, Shinde was greeted with felicitation by the peasants in Dhulia, Jalgaon, Amaravati and Nagpur. Shinde addressed these meetings attended by thousands of peasants by enlightening them on the topic "Peasants and Government".[65] When Shinde reached Calcutta, a 'Tenancy Bill' was on anvil in the Bengal Legislative Council. The Jamindars who formed the Congress party in Bengal, were against the provisions of the Tenancy Bill. Shinde urged the Bengal Provincial Congress leaders to observe a liberal policy with regard to the problems of tenants.[66]

On his arrival on 8th November, 1928, in Poona, Shinde found that the Standing Committee of the Bombay Presidency Peasants Conference had ceased to work, due to its division into Brahmans and non-Brahmans, and due to more and more engrossment of Keshavrao Jedhe in Congress Party's work.[67] Dinkarrao Javalkar desired to have a separate organisation of non-Brahmans. N. C. Kelkar formed another Association called 'Land League' and invited Shinde to participate in the work of framing Constitution for it.[68] The Land League acquired the sponsorship of Vallabhbhai Patel. The Executive Committee consisted of almost entirely Brahmans and its resolutions called for recognition of private property in land, full proprietorship rights to the owner, 'whether he cultivates the land himself or through his tenants'.[69] Shinde informed Vallabhbhai Patel that the 'Land League' was nothing else but 'A Land Lord League'.[70]

However, "The Bombay Presidency Peasants Conference" proved a great success as it was through it that the non-Brahman militants took a direct lead in opposition to the government. Its effect was, according to Shinde, to turn their attention to Nationalism, though

their feet remained firmly bound to the cause of the 'non-Brahmans'.[71]

During the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the Karmaveer carried out extensive tours in the talukas of Junnar, Khed, Haveli, Saswad and awakened the peasants to the political situation in the country and got their sympathy for the civil disobedience movement.[72] However, Shinde, did not get himself lost in the political movement though he participated in it and suffered imprisonment from 18th May to 14th October, 1930. Immediately after his release from the prison, he resumed the work of peasant organisation. Shinde's work in peasant movement during the period between 1931 to 1932 seems to be somewhat influenced by socialistic thoughts. By this time, Madhavrao Bagal was writing his series of articles **"Satyashodhakana Ishara"**, informing the Satyasamajists of the similarity of thoughts between Satyashodhak movement and Socialism.[73] Shinde agreed to write a foreword to the book, **'Satyashodhakana Ishara'**.

Shinde actively participated and guided some of the most notable conferences such as Walva Taluka Peasants Conference held at Borgaon on 6th June, 1931,[74] the Chandavad Taluka Peasants Conference held at Vadner on 19th September, 1931,[75] and the Samsthani Shetkari Parishad held at Terdal in Sangli State on 3rd January, 1932.[76]

Shinde worked hard for inspiring peasants to organise their permanent organisations on the Taluka level, and gave them guidance to achieve economic, political, social and cultural advance. In his speeches and article, Shinde made some challenging statements which may be briefly noted.

He clearly defined the work, 'Shetkari' (Cultivator) as one "who tills only that much land which is essential for him for the nourishment, education, and comfortable living for his family; and tills the land with the help of his family members and relatives."[77]

He further said that, "all others who claim the ownership of the land as the rentier landlord, and the present

British Government, are capitalists, because they claim profit from the cultivation without helping the cultivation in any way."[78] They are the exploiters of the cultivator.

"So long as the government works for the welfare of peasantry, it is the duty of the peasant to pay the land-tax to the government, and not otherwise."[79] The non-payment of the tax, Shinde emphasized, "though a very sharp constitutional weapon, should not be resorted to, too often. It is just a temporary suspension for getting the condition of the peasantry reviewed and resived by the government."[80]

"The taxes that the government collects from the people fall on the peasant directly or indirectly to the extent of 9|10th of the aggregate amount of his income, but what the peasant gets in return is not even 1|10th of the total benefits offered by the government to the people in general. The villages are not getting facilities of roads, transport and communication, drinking water, hospitals, schools, temples and entertainment, while 15 crores of rupees are spent on simply establishing the capital of New Delhi."

He further pointed out that, "The capitalists including government, the rentier landlord, merchants and millowners can be goaded only by organising Federal Unions of peasants and Workers."

"Capitalism will not disappear completely in any circumstances. It will be there in the form of private factory owner as is the case with capitalistic countries, or as the government controlling nationalised industries as the case with Bolshevik Russia. But with the strengthening of the Unions of the workers and peasants, the fierce capitalist can be harnessed as a horse under the control of a rider. The capitalist can be reduced to the state of a docile chairman."

Shinde gave the hope to the peasants, "Though capitalism is the outcome of Industrial Revolution, with the acceleration of industrialisation, facilities of communication and transport, and spread of education, miseries inflicted by capitalism will disappear; and with

it will disappear the distinction between capitalist and working class as well as that between the rural areas and urban areas."[81]

The Chandvad Taluka Conference was held at Vadner, on 19th September, 1931, for establishing the Union of peasants of Chandvad taluka, for which Shinde was invited to preside and lead. Shinde reprimanded the peasants for not having done the work on their own. He said he would have been happy to come just as an adviser and not as President, who in fact should have been from among themselves. He told them that though the peasant-awakening had taken roots very rapidly and successfully within the previous 2-3 years, the awakening was not followed by organising their associations and unions.[82] He told the peasants, "You must not expect help from the government, nor from the National Congress."

With reference to the National Congress, Shinde expressed the view that, "So long as Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi are in the Congress, the Congress will remain in favour of the peasants."[83] He further asked them to note that "Congress is an organisation having mainly political programme and politlcal objectives while the main need of the peasants is economic uplift."[84] "Even though Mahatmaji has sympathy for peasants' misfortune, there are many other factors which may prevent the National Congress from upholding the cause of the peasants".[85] So the peasants have to work out their own salvation. The only measure on which they can very well depend for controlling the government, the money-lender or the rentier landlord, the millowner, or any human power, is their Union[86] and the Federation of Unions of peasants and workers."

He warned them that "attempts will be made by the capitalists to separate peasants from the workers,[87] so they have to be on their guard."

A very important piece of advice given by Shinde to the peasants was that "the peasants will be in a position to control the market for getting fair price for their produce. This they can do through their associations.[88] They should bring the market of their Taluka under

their control." Not only that, but Shinde hoped, that the ancient status of village-autonomy may also be revived, making the peasants the controlling factor for the artisans and traders.[89] According to Shinde, village autonomy (gavagada) can be reestablished only by "unity, education, prohibition, improvement of communication and transport and social reform. The peasants must not remain blind to political, social and cultural development. They must develop the capacity to choose their representatives from among themselves". Shinde reprimanded Gunjal, the member of Central Assembly for requesting the government not to apply the Sharda Act to some non-Brahman castes. Shinde pointed out that politics alone was being attended to by the people, while social reform, economic progress, and religion were left uncared for.[90]

In the 'Conference of Peasants of Indian States' held at Terdal in Sangli State, on 3rd January, 1932, Shinde pointed out that he was pained to see that the Indian rulers were inflicting misery on the people of their own blood and flesh. They were reduced to the state worse than that of even the untouchables in the British province.[91] He pointed out, "In the days of World-wide depression, it is the peasant who is worst affected of all.[92] In the age of money-economy, he suffers due to lack of his control over money. The state rulers may relieve the peasant of some misery by collecting the land-tax in kind.[93] The peasant suffers more than the Government, traders, or the salaried employees mainly because of his lack of unity and his ignorance of economic process. If an educated farmer appears on the scene the land-lord, government and the money-lender feel horrified and make all efforts to trap him as a traitor somehow or the other".[94] The Conference was held mainly for demanding concession or suspension in payment of land-tax to the government, rent to the land-lord and interest to the money-lender, in view of the depression. Shinde urged the government, landlords, and the money-lenders to co-operate to relieve the peasant from his miseries.[95] He urged them not to identify Shinde him-

self as a Bholshevik.[96] Had he really been a Bolshevik, he would not have come over there to beseech their co-operation. He requested them to give help to the peasants to organise their unions, help them in removing their internal differences, and help the Unions financially as well, because all the money belonging to the peasants was with them.[97]

Shinde's Contribution

Thus, Karmaveer Shinde rendered important service to the cause of the peasant movement in Western India in its formative period.

Shinde saved the small peasant-proprietors in Western India from extirpation when the factors favouring concentration of land in the hands of rich land-lords, and plantation-owners were gathering ominously. Not only the capitalists but even the intelligentsia from non-Brahmans and Brahmans fell in line with the capitalist thinking that abolition of Small Holdings was the only way out for improving the present condition. The emphasis was being put more on the collection of revenue for the government, than on the future of the peasants who would lose their land. Everybody took for granted that fragmentation of Small Holdings was evil and needed to be eliminated by any means. Even Harold H. Mann, 'the Yorkshire Puritan', in spite of his own findings that holders of Small Holdings were not essentially ill-off, could not help but fall in line with Keatings and Sir Chunilal Mehta. They were blind or pretended to be blind to the benefits of 'Fragmentation of cultivation'. Harold H. Mann even though he had himself noted them, did not emphasise it when the Small Holdings Bill was on the anvil. Dr. P. C. Patil, the scholar patron of Satyashodhak Movement, issued a handbill urging the peasants to accept the bill without any hesitation.[98] The peasants were aware of the consequences but were utterly helpless before the men in authority supporting the ideology of capitalism. The land was to be capitalised. It was Shinde who strongly argued in favour of peasant proprietorship, its strength in co-operatives, and the need of equitable

and honourable distribution of national wealth among its people. The twist given by Shinde to governmental agricultural policy in favour of the cultivator, completely changed the course of the events in future. When Keshavrao Jedhe joined the Congress in 1930, he established a section of 'Peasants Conference' in the National Congress.[99] In 1939, the Tenancy Act came to be passed and it was followed in 1948, by the Bombay Tenancy and Agricultural Lands Act,[100] which was not implemented till 1961. Shinde made efforts to enlighten the peasants on the nature of the modern economy of the industrial age and to grapple with the difficulties created by industrial age by organising trade-unions. Indian leaders talked in cultural and political terms. Shinde taught the peasants to think in terms of economic betterment. He gave hope to the dismayed peasantry by showing them how their position could be improved by controlling market for their product, by electing representatives only from amongst themselves, by resorting to development of ability rather than by fostering bookish education, and by fostering self-help among them. He told them persistently that their 'Federation of Workers and Peasants' was the only panacea for removal of all their miseries—political, social, economic and cultural. Though Shinde's efforts could not materialise immediately, they proved to be the seeds that were sown in the countryside. These blossmed in the form of the next generation of leaders from the rural areas. These leaders won predominance in National Congress. They also got themselves elected to the Bombay Legislative Council and succeeded in passing laws favourable to the tenants and poor cultivators.

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21. Gail, Omvedt: Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society, pp. 190-192.

22. Ibid., p. 218; C/f. Letter of July 6, 1921, to Secretary, Home Department, cited in Legislative Council Debates, 1921, Appendix F, pp. 562-68.

23. Gail, Omvedt, op. cit., p. 217.

24. Ibid., p. 222.

25. Ibid., p. 221.

26. Ibid., p. 222.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., p. 223.

29. Bombay Legislative Council, Vol. 21, 1927, p. 572.

30. Ibid., p. 606.

31. Gail, Omvedt: Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society, p. 225.

32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., p. 225; C/f. Gokhale, P. P.: Jagrut Satara, (1935), pp. 107-108.

34. Shinde, V. R.: op. cit., p. 369; Ghorapade, E. K.: 'Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil', (Shri Lekhan Vachan Bhandar, Poona, 1951), p. 96.

35. Gail, Omvedt: op. cit., p. 225.

36. Ibid., p. 350.

37. Ibid., p. 225; C/f. Vijayi Maratha, October 3, November 14, 28, 1927.

38. Gokhale, P. P.: Jagrut Satara, 1935, pp. 106-107-108.

39. Gail, Omvedt: op. cit., pp. 240-41.

40. Shinde, V. R.: op. cit., p. 383.

41. Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. 21, 1927; pp. 519-20.

42. File of Small Holding Bill (Archives in Bombay).

43. Choksey, R. D.: Economic life of the Bombay Deccan, pp. 100-101.

44. Ibid., p. 99.

45. Ibid., p. 101.

46. Revision Settlement; C/f. Papers relating to the Second Revision settlement of Javli Taluka, August, 1923, by M. Kothawala, Bombay, (Government Central Press, 1929), pp. 93-94; Papers relating to Second Revision Settlement of Patan Taluka, 1926, by H. Briston, Bombay, (Government Central Press, 1928), p. 87.

47. Bombay Legislative Council Debates, Vol. 21, 1927, p. 606.

48. Ibid., p. 7.

49. Ibid., p. 519.

50. Ibid.

51. The Summary of Bill is given in N. N. Mitra (Ed.): **The Indian Quarterly Registrar**, Vol. II, 1927, pp. 273-274.

52. Ibid., p. 273.

53. Ibid., p. 274.

54. Shinde, V. R.: **Athavani Va Anubhava**, p. 383, Gail, Omvedt, **op. cit.**, p. 225.

55. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): **Shinde Lekha Sangraha**, p. 257.

56. Ibid., p. 258.

57. "The Non-official Social and Economic Survey of a Konkan Village" by V. G. Ranade, records that out of 192 acres of cultivable land, 24 non-agriculturists owned 113 acres of land while 28 agriculturists owned 78 acres. Almost all acquisition by the non-agriculturists was effected within last 50 or 60 years", Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Abridged Report, 1928, p. 132.

58. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): **Shinde Lekha Sangraha**, p. 258.

59. Ibid., p. 259.

60. Ibid., p. 260.

61. Ibid., p. 261.

In 1923, 3½ lakhs of acres of land were forefeited from the poor peasants who could not pay the enhanced assessment over it. The Government planned to sell the land at a very low price, (Rs. 15 per acre), to the Zamindars in Sindh. This land was to come under perennial water-supply from Sukkur Barrage. The price of the land even at that time with uncertainty of water was nearly Rs. 200 per acre. C/f. Nripendra Nath Mitra (Ed): **Indian Quarterly Register**, Vol. I, 1928, p. 279.

62. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): **Shinde Lekha Sangraha**, p. 262.

63. Ibid., p. 263.

64. N. N. Mitra (Ed.): Indian Quarterly Register, Vol. II, 1928, pp. 217-18; Also M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): **Shinde Lekha Sangraha**, p. 256.

65. Shinde, V. R.: **Athavani Va Anubhav**, pp. 385-86.

66. Ibid., p. 386.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Gail, Omvedt: **Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society**, p. 226.

70. Shinde, V. R.: **Athavani Va Anubhava**, p. 386.

71. Ibid.

72. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): **Shinde Lekha Sangraha**, p. 297.

73. Bagal, M. K.: **Bandhanat**, (undated), p. 66.

74. Bagal, M. K.: Ibid., p. 83.

'Shinde's Lekha Sangraha' edited by M. P. Mangudkar, has given the date of this Conference as 6-6-1932, p. 336. According to M. K. Bagal's 'Bandhanat', the date of Conference is 6-6-1931, which is more reliable.

75. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): Shinde Lekha Sangraha, p. 297ff.

76. Ibid., p. 275ff.

77. Ibid., p. 291.

The definition was essential as the absentee-landlords also claimed to be the cultivators, and were organising the Association as "Land League" of N. C. Kalkar, and claimed to represent even the poor peasantry—Shinde, V. R.: Athavani Va Anubhava, p. 386. It could also be added here that "the Land Revenue Assessment Committee of 1924 had touched on the question of cultivation and non-cultivating landlord. Some members of the Committee were in favour of making this distinction in fixing the Assessment in order to prevent land passing out of the hands of bonafide agriculturists. But the evidence produced before the Committee was strongly against any such distinction being made"—Choksey, R. D. Economic Life in Bombay Deccan, pp. 102-103.

78 M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): Shinde Lekha Sangraha, pp. 291-92.

79. Ibid., p. 292.

80 Ibid., p. 294.

With regard to roads, while the provincial roads were to be constructed by Public Works Department, the District roads by District Board, the village roads were left to the concern of villages. Consequently, village roads connecting villages, were mere tracks—Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Abridged Report, p. 42.

81. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): Shinde Lekha Sangraha, p. 296.

82. Ibid., p. 297.

83. Ibid., p. 299.

84. Ibid., p. 299.

85. Ibid., p. 300.

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., p. 299.

88. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): 'Shinde Lekha Sangraha', p. 302.

Shinde's views were almost echoed by the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India appointed in 1928. It stressed the importance of establishing regulated markets for securing the best possible financial return to the cultivator for his improved quality and increased outturn. Encouragement may be given to the local governments in establishing such Regulated Markets. Co-operative Sales Societies should be encouraged to secure an adequate premium for produce of superior quality. The Management of Market should be invested in a Market Committee giving adequate representation to the actual cultivator. Any licensed broker should not be eligible for election to the committee to represent the cultivator's interest.—Royal Commission on Agriculture in India, Abridged Report, 1928, pp. 43-44 and 46.

89. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): Shinde Lekha Sangraha, p. 303.

90. Ibid., p. 304.

91. Ibid., p. 278.

92. Ibid., p. 277.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid., p. 279.
96. Ibid., p. 280.
97. Ibid.
98. M. P. Mangudkar (Ed.): Shinde Lekha Sangraha, p. 262.
99. Bagal, M. K.: 'Bahujan Samajache Shilpakar', (1966), p. 81.
100. Bombay Code, Vol. II, (1921-48), p. 2755.

Chapter VIII

TOWARDS NATIONAL INTEGRATION

Though V. R. Shinde was busy in his programme of Liberal Religion and the Depressed Classes Mission, he did not keep himself aloof from political movement organised by the Indian National Congress. He worked for infusing spirit of nationalism among the masses, for safeguarding the interests of the backward classes, and for bringing about national integration of different classes in the country.

V. R. Shinde's national sentiment was aroused, when he worked as a volunteer at the annual session of the Indian National Congress held at Poona in 1895. He was very much moved by the eloquence of Surendranath Banerjee. Shinde felt so much admiration for the nationalistic activities of Lokamanya Tilak that before leaving India for London in 1901, he made it a point to meet Tilak personally, and receive his blessings for his new career. Thus, Shinde came in close contact with Tilak and continued to maintain good relationship with him even afterwards.

During his stay in England, Shinde noticed that there were in England, a number of cultural and political organisations and parties. They had a variety of programmes and policies. Yet in matters of national interests, they were all united. Shinde was very much impressed by this.

On his arrival in India in 1903, Shinde was involed in holding the 'All India Theistic Conference' and 'Depressed Classes Conference' every year. However, these conferences were held in the same town and as an extension of

the All India National Congress. Shinde who was interested in political activities, attended the session of the National Congress every year, and came in contact with the national leaders whom he urged to attend the All India Theistic Conference and the Depressed Classes Conference. Shinde knew personally a number of political leaders such as G. K. Gokhale, Sir Narayanrao Chandavarkar. Prof. Haribhau Limaye, N. C. Kelkar, Annie Besant. Lala Lajpatrai, R. P. Paranjpe, Dadabhai Nauroji, N. M. Joshi, G. A. Natesan, S. R. Bomanjee, C. V. Mehta, Babu Bipinchandra Pal, P. K. Telang, Laxmidas Tersi, Br. M. R. Jayakar, Bhulabhai Desai, Ravindranath Tagore, Sarojini Naidu and many others.

However, Shinde was very much pained to see the intolerance and enmity between the important political groups as Muslims on one hand and Hindus on the other. the Moderates on one hand and the Extremists on the other and the Brahmans on one hand and the non-Brahmans on the other. Shinde made an effort to work in co-operation with these different groups in their constructive and progressive programmes, and also won their goodwill for his activities.

I

Shinde felt deep concern over the differences between the Brahman-extremists and non-Brahmans in Bombay province. The conflict between them became more severe during the first quarter of the 20th Century. There were certain causes for this conflict.

By the end of the 19th Century, the non-Brahman population in Maharashtra came very much under the influence of western idea of equality of opportunity for all in education, employment, and cultural activities. These ideas were nurtured among the non-Brahmans by the speeches, writings and activities of liberal Brahmans and non-Brahmans like Lokahitavadi, M. G. Ranade, Mahatma Phule, and Gangarambhau Mhaske. The Deccan Maratha Education Society, founded in 1883, was an ex-

ample of this united effort.[1] The desire for equal opportunity in cultural matters was aroused by the efforts of the Arya Samaj that was founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati. When Dayananda Saraswati came to Poona in 1875, he was humiliated[2] by the orthodox Brahmans for holding the view that Vedic ritual was an heritage not only of Brahmans but also of all the Four Varnas.

In continuation with these teachings the Maratha ruler of Gwalior in 1886, Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda in 1896, and Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur in 1897, asserted their Kshatriya status and claimed vedic mantras for their rituals. Not only the orthodox Brahmans but also the great Tilak derided and opposed them in his editorials of 22nd October and 29th October 1901.[3] Tilak threatened that the Imperial British Government would have to take note of this activity of these rulers as it had created ill-will and disputes among the different castes in the country.[4]

Consequently, these rulers got their right to Vedic rituals conceded by the liberal Brahmans who complied with their desires.[5] The opposition of the Brahmans to Vedokta rituals for non-Brahmans, was resented by the non-Brahmans. This give an impetus to revived activity of Satyashodhaka Samaj and an intensive educational effort by non-Brahmans. By 1919 the Satyashodhak Samaj had established 49 branches in 28 Talukas in 14 districts as that of Poona, Thane, Kolaba, Kolhapur, Ahmednagar, Nasik, East Khandesh, Aurangabad, Nagpur, Yeotmal, Akola, and Belgaum. The Satyashodhak Samaj membership was extended to all high and low professions and communities like contractors, trading communities, Kunbi, Mali, Kumbhar, Dhanagar, Khatik, Matang, Mang, and such others.[6] The educational effort was conducted mainly through castewise educational Conferences, of which Akhil Bharatiya Maratha Shikshana Parishad and Mali Education Parishad, were very prominent. The castewise boardings of Marathas, Muslims, Lingayats, Kayasthas, Jains, Daivajnas and Saraswats were founded

in various places. The Maratha rulers made it a point to give preference to non-Brahmans in service of their states in large number, giving offence to Brahmans thereby. By 1919, Maratha Shikshana Parishad had 92 affiliated organisations in British provinces and 21 in princely states. They conducted 16 hostels and 5 reading rooms. The reading rooms were open for students of all castes.[7] Some leaders as Bhaskarrao Jadhav were making efforts for removing the differences of high and low rastes among Marathas, but the conference was very slow to accept it.

V. R. Shinde, a Maratha by caste, was benefited by the enlightened educational activity of the Deccan Education Society between 1893 to 1896, and that of Sayajirao Maharaj between 1896 to 1903. He was grateful to both of them for it; But he refused to be swept off his feet by the spirit of the Brahman versus non-Brahman controversy. This was mainly because Shinde came from a family with Varakari tradition. Moreover, he has treated with affectionate regard by his Brahman teachers and Brahman friends to such an extent that he could not forget their kindness to him. Shinde had seen how in personal relations, human sympathy and affection flowed from both sides.

On the basis of this experience, Shinde started working from the beginning of his career, for the rapproachement between non-Brahmans and Brahmans. A liberal religious worker as Shinde was, he actively helped all the progressive activities of non-Brahmans. He participated in the educational effort and Satyashodhak conference. He helped the revival of Satyashodhak Samaj activities in 1910, and shared joint programme of abolition of untouchability with them. He attended the annual Satyashodhaka Conferences and was selected as the president of the conference of 1916 at Nipani. However, Shinde's efforts for bringing about rapproachement between liberal Brahmans and non-Brahmans, and particularly his insistence that liberal Brahmans should be allowed to be members of the Satyashodhak Samaj incurred dis-

pleasure of B. V. Jadhav, and A. B. Latthe. This demand of Shinde, consequently, led to the cancellation of the invitation that was sent to him requesting him to preside over the conference. However, in spite of this insult, Shinde attended the Conference of 1916. The rift which was caused by this incident in the Satyasodhak Samaj widened gradually afterwards in 1917.

Shinde participated in the All India Maratha Education Conference as well, and worked as the Chairman of its 'school committee'. He made efforts for securing governmental educational facilities for Maratha students.[8] However, he was not happy over the division among the Marathas as Satyashodhaks, aristorcrats, high-caste and low-caste, Kunbis, etc. B. V. Jadhav made efforts for removing these differences by passing resolutions to this effect. But, the Conference and the Marathas were slow to accept it. In 1915, Shahu Maharaj, after his return from Europe, started the movement for abolition of caste distinctions and encouraged inter-caste marriages. Shinde felt happy over this progressive movement and showed his appreciation of it.[9]

VI

In 1916, the political activity in India took an unexpected turn. The first World-War, the Home Rule Movement organised by Tilak and Annie-Besant, the passing of Swaraj resolution by the Muslim League, the rapproachement reached between the Muslim League and the National Congress and the rapproachement between Extremists and the Moderates, changed the face of the political situation in India considerably. The Lucknow Pact that was accepted by the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress, Moderates and Extremists, added strength to the demand for 'Swaraj' more than ever. Tilak occupied a very important position in all these activities. He won popularity not only in Maharashtra but also all over India. He was given a very grand welcome at the Lucknow Congress held in December 1916.

The formulation of the Scheme of 'Swaraj' in the form of Lucknow Pact, the fraternisation of the Muslim League and the Congress, and the unity between Moderates and the Home Rulers gave great satisfaction to Indian patriots.[10]

V. R. Shinde as well, was happy to see the sight of national unity and desired that non-Brahmans as well, should join their hands in supporting the demand of Swaraj. However, the non-Brahmans were scared that, if the Swaraj was granted by the British Government to India, the political authority would pass in the hands of the National Congress. As the National Congress was under the influence of the higher Caste-Hindus, the rule of National Congress would mean revival of the old practices under the rule of the Peshwas. Consequently, to champion the cause of the backward classes and the depressed classes, V. R. Kothari, A. B. Latthe, Bhaskarrao Jadhav and Raobahadur Dongre founded the 'Deccan Rayat Sabha' on 19 July 1917.

Fortunately for the Nationalists, in the following month, on 20 Aug. 1917, the Secretary of State for India, Montagu, made the declaration of Britain's policy of "gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to progressive realisation of responsible government in India as integral part of the British empire".

B. G. Tilak made an attempt to persuade the non-Brahmans to support the demand for Swaraj by his editorial in Kesari (18 September 1917) asking them what type of representation they desired. He also showed his nationalistic fervour, that he would not mind even if all the seats of the Council were secured by the non-Brahmans.[11] The only thing which he detested was the domination of Europeans. He also pleaded that it was because of educational advance among the Brahmans that they were occupying the administrative jobs and also win the seats in the Council. He opposed the demand of reserved seats for the non-Brahmans as this would bring uneducated representatives of the non-Brahmans in the Council,[12] and it would be an impracticable arrangement.

27-9-84
BHAVNAGAR

V. R. Shinde had from the very beginning great admiration for Tilak's bold policy in fighting against British imperialism. Tilak too, on his part had shown interest in V. R. Shinde's joining the Manchester College of Theology, and his Depressed Classes Mission as well. The success won by Tilak in the Home Rule Movement and the Lucknow Pact had increased Shinde's admiration for Tilak, and he was ready to support him in all possible ways to achieve his national goal. Shinde was impressed by Tilak's pleadings, to win the support of non-Brahmans to the Lucknow Pact. Shinde decided to found 'The Rashtriya Maratha Sangha'. He desired to unite the national minded Marathas in the Sangha, and to infuse the spirit of nationalism among the non-Brahmans. The Nationalist Marathas who were under the leadership of Tilak joined the Rashtriya Maratha Sangha organised by Shinde. Narayan Ekhande became the President, V. R. Shinde and Kashinath Jadhav were the Secretaries.[13]

'The Rashtriya Maratha Sangha' was founded on 26 October, 1917. Govindrao Botre, Trimbak Hari Awate, Raosaheb Nimbalkar and Gayakwad, were the other important members.[14] Shinde was sincerely devoted to the cause of infusing national spirit among the Marathas. He had seen the division among Marathas as Satyashodhaks aristocrats, high caste Marathas and low-caste ones, and felt the need of organising them together. In the first pamphlet that was issued, Shinde stated — "Marathas form the majority of the population in Maharashtra. They are the backbone of Maharashtra. Marathas have fulfilled the responsibility of feeding the people as well as protecting them. When the Swarajya is on the threshold of the country, Marathas must be prepared to welcome it. The interests of the Marathas are not separate from the interests of the country. The interests of the Marathas and of the nation are one and the same".[15] In the first mammoth meeting of the Rashtriya Maratha Sangha held near Shaniwar wada on 8 November, 1917, Shinde in his presidential speech, thundered against the scheme of demanding reserved seats for non-Brahmans.[16]

In the meeting, two representatives of each of the castes as Maratha, Brahman, Muslim, Mahar, Mang, Sutar, Shimpi, Prabhu, Mali, Vanjari, Chambhar, Kasar, Koshti, Ramoshi, Gawali, Parit, Gujar, and Varakari-Sampradaya, etc. expressed their support to the Lucknow Pact. Tilak addressed the meeting as the representative of Brahmans and said, "We don't want Swarajya of previous pattern. We shall have western type of democratic government. Caste system has ruined our country considerably. Unless we abolish caste-distinctions. our country will never achieve progress".[17]

As against the 'Rashtriya Maratha Sangha', the non-Brahmans in Maharashtra, in coalition with the non-Brahmans in Madras, founded the 'All India Maratha League' in December, 1917, and Shripatrao Shinde was elected the Secretary of the League.[18] The Maratha League and the Deccan Rayat Association worked together for demanding separate electrorates and reserved seats for the non-Brahman castes. The Maratha League presented its memorandum to the Parliamentary Select Committee appointed to consider the Indian Constitutional Reforms Bill 1919. Shripatrao Shinde and Baburao Jedhe toured in the areas of Bombay, Hubli and Vardha for winning the support of the people to the demands of the maratha League.[19] The Deputation consisting of B.V. Jadhav. S. K. Bole, and V. R. Kothari met Montagu for accepting the demands of separate electorate and reserved seats for the non-Brahman communities.[20]

Tilak desired that the Rashtriya Maratha Sangha should conduct its working under the auspices of the National Congress. Shinde refused the suggestion of Tilak because he believed that Rashtriya Maratha Sangha must remain an independent organisation if it was to be a true association of masses with spontaneous national activity even as that of supporting the Lucknow Pact.[21] The Nationalist Maratha Sangha came to be supported by a recently foreign-returned young barrister of Vardha, Ramrao Deshmukh. The first conference of the Rashtriya Maratha Sanga was held at Belgaum in November, 1917.

When the Belgaum Prantika Congress Conference was held at Athani in the middle of November, 1917, Shinde attended the Conference. In the Conference, Tilak made a speech decrying castewise representation in the Legislative Council. In very sarcastic insulting words Tilak asked, "Of what use are these caste representatives in the legislative council? Is the Kunbi going to hold his plough there? Is a tailor going to use his pair of scissors there? Is a trader going to hold his weighing scales there?"[22] This raised a storm of censure against Tilak in the whole of Maharashtra. Shinde too, came to be criticised as the 'Brahmanised puppet of Tilak'. Shinde suffered all these reproaches to him, and the failures on the part of Tilak, just because he believed that in spite of these failures, Tilak would lead the country to national progress.

It was only when Tilak backtracked in the 'All India Anti Untouchability Conference,' of March, 1918, that Shinde felt intolerable embarrassment at his double dealing. Tilak's reactionary attitude in social matters became more and more intolerable to V. R. Shinde, when Tilak opposed the Inter-caste Marriage Bill presented by Vitthalbhai Patel in Central legislature in August 1918. Tilak forcibly dissolved the meeting that was held by non-Brahmans to express their support to the Intercaste Marriage Bill.[23]

Tilak's policy in dealing with his enemies was that of causing a split among them. He manouvered to set the men from the same caste to fight against their own castemembers. He had at his hand many such men as C.M. Nalawade and Thakuji Jadhav to fight against Marathas, Sakat (a Mang) to fight against untouchables, and Baburao Phule (a relative of Jyotiba Phule, a Mali) to fight against Malis.

While the conflict raged fiercely Tilak remained undisturbed while his own objective was being fulfilled by others.[24] Shinde felt that Tilak was using him as cat's paw in defying the non-brahmans. He also realised that

Tilak was unable to carry out any further progressive activity, as he was unable to bypass his orthodox, selfish, and power-seeking followers, due to the fear that he would lose his leadership.[25]

Consequently when all the reformist groups decided to oppose the **Manapatra** (Address) ceremony to Tilak held by his followers on 7 December, 1918, V. R. Shinde too, joined hands with them. The anti-Manapatra party published a protest memorandum signed by 125 signatories such as Shripatrao Shinde, V. R. Kothari, Baburao Jedhe, Dinakararao Javalkar, Keshavrao Bagade, S. J. Kamble, R. P. Paranjape and others. V. R. Shinde put his signature to this memorandum mentioning specifically on the document itself that "Tilak is a social reactionary and defier of the principles of self-determination and equality. I do not consider him a national leader of this country."[26]

In the meanwhile, in July, 1918, the Montagu Report was published. It caused a split between the Extremists and the Moderates. Tilak criticised the scheme as useless while the Moderates were prepared to implement it. The Montford Report caused a split even among the non-Brahman Party. V. R. Kothari, who desired to form an alliance with Liberals, wanted to work with them in all details as deciding the names of the candidates, election programme, etc. Shripatrao Shinde disagreed with him on this issue. Shripatrao Shinde stated that the interests of the Moderates who consisted of the upper class, capitalists, and industrialists on one hand, and those of non-Brahmans who constituted mainly workers and peasants on the other, were in conflict with each other. The advantage of this alliance would go in favour of the Moderates and the non-Brahmans stood to lose under this arrangement.[27]

The Liberals made an alliance also with the untouchables led by S. J. Kamble and V. R. Kothari. The Liberals, particularly Sir Narayanrao Chandavarkar entertained A. B. Latthe in their meeting, and upheld the non-Brahmans' demand for a separate electorate and reserved

seats. Among the Marathas, Shahu Maharaj preferred the system of nomination to election for reserved seats. He feared, the Nationalists might contest the elections even in the election for reserved seats. Ultimately, when the Southborough Committee visited India for deciding the matters with regard to representation and franchise, the Liberal members of the Committee, S. N. Bannerjee and Shriniwas Shastri tricked the Deccan non-Brahmans, and opposed reservation of seats for them.[28] However, the Reform Act of 1919 granted 7 reserved seats for 'Marathas and others' in the Bombay Province.

As a result of this, the non-Brahmans resolved all the differences of opinion among them by September, 1920, and prepared to contest the elections in 1920. The Nationalists as well as the Satyashodhak Marathas each desired that Shinde should contest the election as their candidate for one of the reserved seats. Shinde rejected this offer as he considered the principle of communal electorate anti-national.[29] Thus, even here Shinde was not ready to compromise his stand forsaking his valued principles.

III

Bahujanpaksha

On the eve of the election of 1920, V. R. Shinde achieved a remarkable advance in forming a political party of economically and socially backward people, who did not get any political privilege by the Reform Act of 1919. On 1 September, 1920, he issued the manifesto of the newly organised 'Bahujan Paksha'.[30]

The formation of this party had certain significant characteristics. In forming this political party, Shinde resorted not to the previous traditional system of caste. Here, he implemented the western concept of classes in which the society in 20th century India was clearly divided. Shinde separated the higher class of educated and moneyed people who enjoyed social prestige, economic well-being, and political privileges, from the uneducated

poverty-stricken class of people. Not taking into consideration caste or religion, he included all the high salaried employees, lawyers, doctors, landlords, jagirdars, businessmen, Shastris and priests in the higher class. In the lower class he included people with very little income and education such as small cultivators, small shopkeepers, workers with low wages, teachers with small salaries, soldiers of lower rank, untouchables and women — all of them irrespective of their caste or religion. A special note was taken of the women as whatever caste or class they might belong to, women were not given franchise nor representation by the Reform Act 1919.

In the very manifesto itself, Shinde pointed out the chief demands of the lower classes which he identified as the national requirements. He included in his demands universal compulsory education, freedom of worship and prohibition. Shinde made a sarcastic remark in very fine terminology as to how the national requirements as the above were ignored by the Nationalists and as to how the Progressive Moderates expressed their inability in this case. Shinde expressed his intense desire that this programme could be achieved by bringing about awakening in the Bahujan Samaj for their needs.

The nomenclature 'Bahujan Samaj' and 'Bahujan Paksha' is in itself a remarkable success in the search for an appropriate term to denote the masses of the ignorant and backward people. Jyotiba Phule used the term 'Shudra and Atishudra' which had certainly an insulting and humiliating connotation. Jyotiba insisted on using it to denote the intensity of the degradation of these castes. Afterwards, the term '**Magaslele**' and '**Anti-Magaslele**' came to be used by the revived Satyashodhak Samaj. But that too, though indicative of the situation, did not have any hopeful connotation. The term '**Bahujan Samaj**' was used by the editor of **Dina Bandhu** on 19 January, 1896.[31] In 1903, V. R. Shinde for the first time used the term '**Bahujan Samaj**' in his article "**Hindustanatil Udar Dharma**" (Liberal Religion in India).[32] From 1920, the term came to be used as current term indicating the

majority community in its secular and mass identification. The term 'Brahmanetar' was an invention made by Brahmans to indicate other castes. But as noted by Tilak himself, it may mean any of the non-Brahmans including Muslims and the British. The term **Bahujan Samaj** indicated the majority community certainly of lower classes in India.

The Bahujan Samaj included the workers. The welfare activity for the labourers was first started by Narayan Maghaji Lokhande in Bombay in 1884, through the 'Dinabandhu Sabha'. In 1918, S. K. Bole took a keen interest in the welfare of the labourers and founded 'People's Union.' It was under the auspices of this Union that Shahu Maharaj delivered his famous lecture informing workers as to how political power in Europe was being captured by the labour parties there.[33] Shahu Chhatrapati's hopeful expression in words, found a practical experiment in the more comprehensive organisation of V. R. Shinde.

In 1920, Shinde decided to contest the election in Poona Constituency for a general seat as a candidate of Bahujan Paksha. He was fortunate in bringing all the non-Brahmans including Satyashodhakites, aristocrats and the Nationalists to support him in the election. Shahu Maharaj, on his own accord, wrote him a letter wishing him success and promising him all help. Khaserao Jadhav of Baroda undertook the responsibility of meeting the financial expenditure. Shripatrao Shinde, with his paper 'Vijayi Maratha' and Baburao Jedhe with his massive organisation of volunteers were ready to support V. R. Shinde. This unity in supporting an independent candidate, who contested the election defying the highly desired principle of communal representation was an achievement in itself, even though it was short-lived and was shattered on the rock of religious and communal dispute.

The annual meeting of the Shivaji Society of Poona (3 October, 1920) held in Bhavani Peth, Poona, was

attended by all sections of Marathas and was presided over by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. In this meeting the Nationalist Marathas challenged Shahu Chhatrapati's authority to decide the religious issues. Bhaskarrao Jadhav criticised the creation of the institution of Kshatra Jagadguru as unessential. V. R. Shinde expressed his opinion that Shahu Chhatrapati had every right to decide the religious issues. So instead of creating a separate seat of Kshatra Jagadguru, Shahu Chhatrapati should assume the authority himself. The Tilakite Marathas as Kashinath Jadhav and Rambhau Gole, took the opportunity to challenge Shahu Chhatrapati's authority to interfere in the matters of religion; they created confusion and stampede. Not only was the meeting dispersed, but the differences created among Marathas and a sense of insecurity among the Kolhapur group brought on defeat to V. R. Shinde in his election.[34]

One of the other causes of the opposition of some non-Brahmans to Shinde, was his theory of 'elite leadership' for representing the ignorant masses. Shinde inherited this theory from the liberals in England. In 1920, Shinde believed that for representing the cause of the masses a leader from the Elite Society was needed. However, after the peasant movement (1928), Shinde changed his opinion on the basis of his experience and advocated that "the leader of the community must be from that community itself. He alone will be able to know their difficulties and lead them on right lines."[35]

V. R. Kothari too, opposed the non-Brahmans in supporting Shinde. V. R. Shinde was supported by non-Brahmans for his rare abilities of organisation, sincerity of purpose and nationalistic ideals. V. R. Kothari misinterpreted this support as casteism on the part of Shripartao Shinde and others. A very fierce journalistic war ensued between Kothari and Shripatrao Shinde on this issue. However, though Kothari opposed Shinde at that time, afterwards while reviewing the situation in his 'Junya Athavani' in 1973, Kothari admits that Shinde's political stand in that election was correct.[36]

Though V. R. Shinde suffered defeat, it was not an ignoble failure for him. The principle of national unity which Shinde was adoring helped to sow seeds of this new idealism among some of the non-Brahmans. Another success was the organisation of Bahujan Paksha, though it withered away after the election, it came to sprout from time to time as the need of such organisation was felt in future.

IV

National Integration

Between 1921 to 1929, the non-Brahman Party suffered gradual disintegration. The first generation of leaders showed more interest in winning seats on the Council and securing favour of the Government than advancing the cause of the people.[37] In the elections of 1923 and 1926, the degeneration of the first-rank leaders was very rapid. Not only there ensued disputes on the basis of caste, but reference came to be made to high and low castes while choosing the candidates for election.[38] In the Municipalities, Brahman non-Brahman conflict assumed inordinate proportions — particularly in Poona. It brought about an atmosphere of intense hatred, journalistic war, and slinging of insults on each other. Keshavrao Jedhe, as a member of the Poona Municipality, suggested that a statue of Jyotiba Phule be installed in the city of Poona. Not only was Jedhe's suggestion rejected with contempt, but a resolution condemning him was also passed in the session, in which N. V. Gadgil took leading part.[39] **Chhatrapati Mela** of Jedhe and Jawalkar, and **Ganapati Mela** of Tilakites, showered slights on each other. Brahmans of all shades, Liberals as well as orthodox, joined hands to meet the danger from the non-Brahmans and to demand police protection against the terrorism of non-Brahmans.[40] At the taluka level, the Satyashodhak 'tamashas' were spreading hatred against Brahman-superiority in socio-religious life and against economic exploitation of the cultivators by Brahman landlords and money-lenders.

As a result of this, the non-Brahman leaders of the first rank such as Shahu Maharaj, V. R. Kothari, Babasaheb Kamat and Bhaskarrao Jadhav disowned the non-Brahman movement. The array of active militant youths who formed the second line of leadership felt betrayed by the front rank leaders.

The British Government was pursuing a policy of 'divide and rule'. The non-Brahmans refused Brahmanic claims of social superiority. This created an atmosphere of intense hatred between Brahmans and Marathas, and the refusal of the non-Brahmans to join the Brahman dominated national movement. In the shadow of this civil strife, Shinde consistently and patiently attempted to work out a sense of national integration among the new generation of non-Brahmans and that of Brahmans. Since 1922 to the end of his life, Shinde continued this work through his public lectures, writings, and interviews. Shinde aimed at re-educating the people in Maharashtra for their unification. He systematically analyased the situation, undertook research into the origin of the issues of conflict, interpreted them in view of the present situation and guided the people to organise themselves with a view to facing future events.

Shinde understood the harm done to the unity of the society by the 'Aryan Theory of Race' and the "Aryan Theory of Culture of Sanskrit". Though the scholars as back as 1890 had found the theory of Aryan race untenable, it continued to cast its spell on the minds of the higher castes as late as the middle of the 20th century. Equally harmful was the theory of the Sanskritist culture that stamped inferior status on Dravidians, Muslims and others. Shinde attacked the 'theory of Aryan race' and 'Aryan culture' very diligently through his memorable article on 'Indian Civilization' that was published in The Indian Daily Mail, (21 January 1925). In his lecture series on Development of Bhagavat Religion **"Bhagavat Dharmacha Vikas"** from July 1925 to August 1925 in the Prarthana Samaj Mandir at Poona, in his article 'Vedokta Ki Puranokta' in **'Vijayi Maratha'** (April 1922), and in a series of articles

between 1929-1931 in **'Ratnakar'** magazine on the topic of Origin of Marathas, Shinde stated, "Neither Brahmans nor Kshatriyas need be proud of their descent from Aryan race. According to Pargiter, the only ruling Kshatriya dynasty was that of lunar dynasty of Puru, while the other famous Kshatriya dynasties of Solar family and Naga family were Dravidians. The Brahmans too, were originally Dravidians and afterwards taking shelter with the Ail rulers, they started practising performance of Yajna." Shinde further stated that the study of the ancient Puranas proved that there were marriages between Brahman priests and Kshatriyas. The lineage of the famous Brahman families as that of Vasishtha, Angiras and Bhrugu was continued not merely through their own sons born of their body, but through their disciples and adopted children, some of whom were born in Kshatriya families.[41] In the lineage of Bhrugu a Brahman, Vadhyashwa and Divodas were Kshatriyas. Bharadwaj a Brahman boy, was adopted by the King Bharat. Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa, the composer of Vedic Samhita and Purana Samhita, was a Brahman born of a fisher woman. Shinde remarked that it was quite ridiculous that while early Brahmans who were more interested in spiritual affairs did not mind free mixture of castes and races, Brahmans of today interested in worldly affairs took pride in speaking proudly of the purity of their caste.

Shinde agreed with Enthoven in tracing the origin of Marathas and Rajputs to the Tak Shakas. After examining the sociological evidence, Shinde says that evidence proves that Marathas are mixture of Aryans, Shakas, Pallavas. Huns and Abhirs,[42] who invaded the country in different periods and established their political power in Maharashtra and established their supremacy in the village administration that was first organised by Kunbis. Shinde says Kunbis are Dravids in their origin.

Referring to the supermacy of Vedic culture, Shinde stated that the Indian religion is not much influenced by the Vedic religion with its emphasis on 'Karma'. The tradition of Bhakti cult had grown up from the non-Aryan

Bhagavat sects as Devi Bhagavat and Shiva Bhagavat,[43] and were succeeded by Budda Bhagavat, Jina Bhagavat and Vishnu Bhagavat, which became popular in India. Shinde further stated that the present sects as Varakari sect, Lingayat sect, Mahanubhava sect, which have democratic principles of equality are a valuable contribution made by men from supposedly low castes. Sikhism is a contribution of Hindus and Muslims. After narrating the diversity, Shinde in his article 'Marathyanchi Purva Pithika' showed the possibility of the unity of the human race by stating that Aryas, Dravidas, Huns, Shakas, Greeks and Teutons are from the same place that is known as 'Shakadwipa' i.e., the vast region of Central Asia, and all of them were the branches of the warlike people who became known as the 'group of Shakas.'[44]

Shinde absolved the Aryans of the accusation that they had created the caste system and the institution of untouchability. He stated that many other human races outside India had the custom of endogamy, non-commensality and untouchability. For instance, in Israel, the priests do not eat anything given by others. In England, the higher class observes restrictions on marriage, while in Japan and Burma, untouchability was inflicted on conquered races.[45]

Shinde stated that if the country and the people are to achieve progress, it could be done only by unity. As for the Hindus, if Brahmans, non-Brahmans and the untouchables are unified together, the country will achieve progress in social, economic and political field. As for the ways of ending the disputes and achieving this unity, Shinde pointed out that the higher castes — Brahmans and Kshatriyas—should abstain from exhibiting their false pride of noble birth. "The higher castes should bestow their privileges on those lower classes who don't have them".[46] It is because of the privilleges enjoyed by one class to the exclusion of others that the disputes are created.

Shinde acknowledged that certain good as well as bad qualities were cultivated by certain castes. For instance, he maintained that the Marathas, though noble, lacked

in the ability of organisation and are uneconomical, while Brahmans, though economical and had ability of organisation, were selfish. If Brahmans and Marathas unite in common effort their virtues and defects would be well-balanced.

Shinde stressed the importance of cultivating unity not only on provincial, but also on national level. The provincial differences must be abolished. The young men should look even further to the unity of the world. They should follow Gandhiji who advocated cause of universalism.[47]

Shinde worked assiduously to create the spirit of nationalism among the non-Brahmans. Till 1920, his achievement was that of pulling out some of the notable leaders as Shripatrao Shinde and Baburao Jedhe to cross the limits of communalism. Shinde started bringing non-Brahman young leaders in association with Gandhiji since 1918. Shinde did not participate in the non-co-operation movement. He believed that as the British government was prepared to grant the reforms willingly, the non-co-operation movement would hinder the progress of the programme of reforms. Shinde himself contested the election that was held under the Reform Act of 1919. Though Shinde expressed resentment against the slow and unplanned activity of Mahatma Gandhiji in case of the untouchables, Shinde continued to follow Gandhiji's programme of wearing Khadi, and supporting prohibition of spirituous drinks.

Shinde talked in very respectful terms about Gandhiji and increased his popularity with the non-Brahmans. In one of his lectures in 1922, he compared Gandhiji with Chhatrapati Shivaji, indicating as to how both of them possessed self-control, as to how both fought against the enemy without hating him, as to how Gandhiji's non-violence and Shivaji's policy of winning over the enemies, were quite identical. Further, he added that Shivaji established Swarajya, while Gandhiji advocated democracy. He added how both of them, in order to attract the masses, had to compromise with certain things as animism and pri-

estly superiority for achieving more noble goals. Gandhiji's goal was to make the nation achieve self-control, and observe non-violent non-co-operation for getting **Swarajya** for India.[48]

However, by 1924, when non-Brahmans invited Gandhiji to a get-together (Pan-Supari) at Jedhe-Wada,[49] it was found that Gandhiji considered non-Brahman party as a party based on hatred of Brahmans and that it was a loyalist party. Shripatrao Shinde took the lead in removing these ideas of Gandhiji about the non-Brahman party. He told Gandhiji that non-Brahman party was the effort of newly educated non-Brahmans and untouchables for getting equal human rights with the Brahmans. Gandhiji was somewhat impressed by this interpretation and expressed his admiration for this effort. However, in 1925, when the representative of **'Vijayi Maratha'** interviewed Gandhiji to see how far his views about non-Brahmans were changed, he found that Ghandhiji still believed in the **Chaturvarnya.** In spite of these views of Gandhiji regarding the non-Brahmans, Shinde reiterated the cause of Khadi movement, in his article "Marathetar Kona?" (who are the non-Marathas?) by saying that "If all the people do observe this activity faithfully, the British would concede Swarajya to India, no doubt, in a year's time."[50]

By 1926, when the non-Brahmans were disillusioned about the success of the scheme of getting reforms and Swarajya through the entry in the Council, the second line of the non-Brahman leaders started supporting the programme of the National Congress. The leading newspaper of non-Brahmans **'Vijayi Maratha'** started openly advocating the boycott of Simon Commission.[51] In 1927, a special session of the non-Brahman Party passed the resolution of allowing individual members to take up the membership of the National Congress retaining the membership of non-Brahmans Party.[52]

Shinde associated himself with the leaders of the young generation of non-Brahmans and concentrated on the development of the spirit of nationalism in them. In

case of Shivaji Memorial issue,[53] Shinde supported the young leaders like Keshavarao Jedhe in opposing Madhavrao Shinde Maharaja of Gwalior for his mischievous move to deprive the 'Shree Shivaji Maratha Society', the original author of the scheme, of its legal authority in respect of the **Shiva-Smarak.** On **9-11-1921** the Prince of Wales laid the foundation stone of the statue of Shivaji Maharaj in Poona. The idea and implementation of the memorial of Shivaji Maharaj in the form of a statue was first initiated by Shree Shivaji Maratha Society. However, the ceremony was supported by Shahu Maharaj and Madhavrao Maharaj Shinde. After the death of Shahu Maharaj, Shinde Maharaj thought of a new plan for the 'Shivaji Memorial'. He thought of organising a new society to take possession of the Memorial. He desired to include Brahmans as well, in the committee. Keshavrao Jedhe, Shripatrao Shinde and Dinakarrao Palkar opposed this illegal activity of Madhavrao Maharaj. They desired to keep the 'Shiva Smarak' as a property of non-Brahmans who viewed 'Shivaji as the protector of his subjects' and not 'only of cows and Brahmans' as was interpreted by Brahman politicians. Shinde presided over the Conference organised by the opposition party held at Bombay on 7-8 December, 1922, and passed the resolution of protest against Madhavarao Maharaja's plan and the resolution that "Shiva Smarak" must remain with the 'Shree Shivaji Maratha Society,' the original author of the scheme. The new leaders Keshavrao Jedhe, Dinkarrao Javalkar, Keshavrao Bagade and Ramchandra Narayan Lad took up another issue of setting up a statue of Mahatama Phule under the auspices of Poona Municipality. They considered Jyotiba Phule as the leader of the nation, as Jyotiba struggled for the welfare of the majority community. The Poona Municipality with its predominance of Tilakite Brahmans had raised a statue of Lokamanya Tilak in Poona. So Jedhe initiated the resolution of raising a similar statue of Mahatma Phule in 1925. However, the resolution created a great wave of opposition of the Brahmans and the resolution was rejected. Nevertheless, Jedhe won the admiration, support and congratula-

tions of all the classes not only from Western Maharashtra but also from far off places as Nagpur, Amravati, Akola.[54] Jedhe, Javalkar and Bagade became national heroes and started mass-politics. They wrote a book **'Deshache Dushmman'** (1925), and organised **Chhatrapati Mela.** The **Chhatrapati Mela** obtained response from hundreds of non-Brahman youths in Poona.[55] By 1927, Satyashodhak Movement was in the hands of this new generation and was spreading very widely and rapidly with the help of **'tamashas'**. The network of the organisation consisted of hundreds of youths from various villages and the intelligent young men who were recently being recruited in the Government service since 1925.[56] The Small-Holdings Bill of depriving the poor peasants of their small holdings created intense resentment against the bill among these youths. V. R. Shinde presided over the 'Mumbai Ilakha Shetkari Parishad' held in Reay Market at Poona in 1928, and guided the young leaders to take a note of the similar movement organised by Vallabhabhai Patel at Bardoli. Shinde stressed the importance of carrying on the Satyagraha Movement under the guidance of Gandhiji, the leader of National Congress.[57] The peasant agitation of 1927-1928 won immediate success; and the channel of communication established by this movement between non-Brahmans and the National Congress led to the joining of non-Brahman youths under Keshavrao Jedhe, to the National Congress.[58],

The new generation of non-Brahman youths, though they had great respect for the technique of **Gandhiji's** Satyagraha movement and his urge for national unity, got their desired promises of social equality and economic welfare assured by the **Youth League** guided by Jawaharlal Nehru. The leader of the Youth Movement in Poona, N. V. Gadgil, who had developed contact with Keshavrao Jedhe since 1926, and had talked to him in terms of their common "real enemy — the British, and the capitalists", established an alliance with him in 1929.[59] Both of them participated in the **Parvati Satyagraha.** The 'Liberal' Brahmans had already been out of the Congress since

1920. The Nationalist Brahmans led by N. C. Kelkar and Bhopatakar were fighting on a losing battle with non-Brahman young leaders on the one hand, and Gandhi on the other for controlling policies of the Congress. Till 1929, they continued the pretext of being the political leaders of Maharashtra Congress. However, when the call for Civil Disobedience Movement was given they withdrew from the Congress and resigned their membership.[60] The Gandhian organiser of Civil Disobedience Movement, Shankarrao Deo, had to found a parallel organisation for conducting Civil Disobedience Movement in Maharashtra. Shankarrao Deo, with the help of a few select persons founded **'Maharashtra Congress Paksha'** to implement the resolution of complete freedom. In the Poona Committee for Civil Disobedience, Balukaka Kanitkar and Haribhau Phatak solicited the help of V. R. Shinde, now popularly known as 'Guruvarya Annasaheb Shinde,[61] for spreading the gospel of Swaraj in rural areas around Poona. Both Keshavrao Jedhe and Annasaheb Shinde took active part in the movement.

V. R. Shinde presided over the meetings for giving farewell to the bands of the Satyagrahis and his wife Rukminibai also attended these functions and blessed the Satyagrahis. Shinde supported Balukaka Kanitkar in his plan of jungle-Satyagraha which spread all over Maharashtra very soon. V. R. Shinde personally toured in talukas of Haveli, Khed and Bhimashankar.[62] The batch of volunteers consisting of Keshavrao Jedhe, who accompanied V. R. Shinde was taught by Shinde to observe a certain religious discipline:Upasana in the morning, observance of non-violence, tolerance and sense of responsibility. They conducted **prabhat pheri**, singing songs from the **Padyavali** to the accompaniment of **Tal, harmonium, Daf** and **Tuntune**, and sang patriotic songs as ballads, held meetings, and carried the flag of satyagrahi with them. It created such enthusiasm for the Satyagraha Movement among the village people that they came to receive the party at the entrance of the village and also gave them farewell. In this tour, Shinde did not ask the people to

hate the Government, nor to break the good laws but break only such laws as were against the welfare of the people. Vasukaka Joshi and Devagirikar visited the party at times. The tour of Shinde created a great national awakening in the village-areas which were already awakened by the call of Satya Shodhaka Samaj. Shinde was arrested and was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment on 18 May, 1930. Keshavrao Jedhe, Dinakarrao Javalkar and Anand Swami also suffered imprisonment. As a result of the co-operation of non-Brahman leaders with the National Congress, the villages showed enthusiasm for civil disobedience, and they actively participated in it. B. V. Jadhav, when he visited V. R. Shinde, remarked, "Not only the cities but the villages too, are set ablaze by the Civil Disobedience Movement". As a result of Keshavrao Jedhe's enthusiastic participation in the movement, Keshavrao Jedhe was selected as a candidate to contest elections for the legislative assembly of Bombay Province in 1934, along with N. V. Gadgil. The selection of Jedhe as a representative of National Congress indicated how the National Congress had to recognise the notable service rendered by the non-Brahmans in the Civil Disobedience Movement, and how the Maharashtra Prantika Congress was no more a monopoly of a handful of Brahman politicians but a truly national organisation respecting the claims of Bahujan Samaj.[63] Though the non-Brahman youths accepted membership of the political organisation of the Congress, the non-Brahman party was also organised as 'Shree Shahu Sevak Society' and it continued the work of social reform, which was originally started by Satya Shodhak Samaj. All the prominent non-Brahman members and non-members of Congress attended the activities of the Shahu Sevak Society.[64]

V. R. Shinde participated in the movement of Praja Parishad that was launched to improve the administration of the Indian States. He presided over the 8th Session of the Praja Parishad in the State of Bhor on 7 May, 1931. Ten years back, the **'Dakshin Maharashtra Sansthan Praja Hitavardhak Sabha'** was founded in 1921 by Vamanrao

Patwardhan. The Hitawardhak Sabha aimed at not Swarajya but at welfare state. The **Hitavardhak Sabha** fought against unjust, increasing burden of taxes and uncontrolled private expenditure of the State ruler and the debasement of law courts. In the state of Bhor, Gopinath Pant Potnis and Shree Shetye conducted **'Hirada-Satyagraha', 'Kadave Satyagraha'**, and **'Jungle Satyagraha'** and they were sentenced to imprisonment.[65] By 1931, the new intended Constitutional reforms were directed to giving responsible Government not only to the provinces under British control but also to Indian States. Shinde offered very important advice. He said, — "Even if the Government is formed by the elected representatives of the people, they cannot be called 'responsible government' unless they are determined to be responsible to the needs and desires of the weak and backward people. It is no use putting the blame of all the miseries of the lower classes on the British bureaucracy. In Municipalities, schools and hospitals, it is our indigenous officers who handle the affairs. How far do they show concern about the welfare of our people?"

Here Shinde seems to have continued the demand made by Jyotiba Phule, who saw two different systems of administrative machineries in India — one conducted by the British Officers in the Central and provincial services, the other of the Indian officers mainly Brahmans at district and taluka levels. The National Congress controlled by the elites demanded Indianisation of higher services, professing that it was only by Indianisation of services that India would advance towards Swarajya. Though the Indian officers were conducting the local administration they were exploiting the poor village people to the utmost.[66] Shinde made the same complaint in his speech. In the session of **'Bhor Praja Parishad'** Shinde stressed the importance of not simply transfer of power, but also of transforming the heart of the officers to be honest and to work for the welfare of the poor and ignorant people in the villages.[67] Shinde says, "This work requires constructive programme which needs to be carried

on for a long time, and it is in the constructive programme that all the differences as discrimination of caste and religion crop up, and they need to be eliminated with planned effort".

Shinde's Contribution

Thus, Shinde was not only a religious reformer, not merely a social reformer but also a man who aimed at introducing reforms and progress in political life of the people as well.

The guiding principles on which he worked were the liberty of the country, the national unity, the right of self-determination, and national integration.

In Western India where the national movement had become a privilege of the Brahmans, Shinde started broadening its basis to include not only the intermediate class but also the lower classes of poor people.

During the first quarter of the 20th century, the non-Brahman movement in its early phase was the movement of the non-Brahman castes for their social and cultural uplift, which they desired to achieve with the goodwill of the British government as far as possible. The non-Brahmans kept themselves aloof from the National Congress dominated by Brahmans, and also from the national movement. Shinde aimed at awakening them to the political movement and started for the first time that their interests were not different from the interests of the whole country. They should participate in the political movement, and assume leadership.

In order to achieve this goal, he organised the 'Maratha Rashtriya Sangha'. Gail Omvedt has criticised it as a caste-organisation.[68] In favour of Shinde it can be argued that Shinde considered Marathas as the leaders of Maharashtra, who, by their background of political history, were not only militant but also the leaders of the villages in rural areas. Shinde aimed at arousing them as the leaders of the non-Brahman community. He presided over the public meeting in which he invited not only

Marathas, but also the representatives of the traditional 18 castes to express their views. It speaks of the comprehensive character of the activity of the 'Maratha Rashtriya Sangha'. However, though Shinde wanted the Sangha to support the Lucknow Pact, Shinde aimed at keeping the Maratha Rashtriya Sangha an independent organisation. However, its caste-character could not be erased. Shinde too, afterwards understood its short-comings and left it.

Due to his previous association with the Liberals in England, Shinde believed that the elite alone could represent the lower uneducated poor people. Afterwards, he changed his views due to his experience of the elites. Shinde gave up his previous views, and with ease, accepted the new ideology that, it is only the representatives coming from the same community and class that can represent effectively the case of that class or community; and this is particularly so in the case of the backward classes. Thus, Shinde showed elasticity in discarding old views and accepting valid ones.

Shinde, who believed in national unity, discarded the idea of separate electorate and reserved seats on caste basis for the non-Brahmans, as it was harmful to the national integrity and unity of the country. He very well understood the danger of the partition of the country. He tried to dissuade non-Brahmans from the scheme of reserved seats, by saying that they could very easily get their candidates elected as they formed the majority.

Following the lead taken by the organisation of Labour parties in Europe, Shinde initiated the scheme of division of the people into classes, for the first time in western Maharashtra, by his formation of **'Bahujan Paksha'**. **'Bahujan Paksha'** was the political organisation of the Bahujan Samaj, i.e. the socially and economically backward people, who also did not have the privilege of franchise. Without regard to the caste or religion, all the poor uneducated people as peasants, labourers, artisans, small shop keepers low rank soldiers, untouchables, and women as a class without any economic or social or political rights, were grouped together. This formation of

Bahujan Paksha was a landmark in the political history of India which remained a guiding star for future organisers of this kind of political parties.

National Integration was a matter close to Shinde's heart. He tried to achieve it on intellectual, social and administrative level. He shattered the pride of purity of blood of Brahmans and Kshatriyas, and showed how all the people in the country are a mixture of different tribes that came in India from time to time. He stated, "The culture of the country as well, with its religion and customs is a mixed culture". He absolved the Brahmans of the crime of creating caste-differences. He further showed the way as to how the differences of high and low castes could be eliminated if the higher castes willingly gave up their privileges.

Further, sensing the futility on the part of non-Brahmans in getting the desired reforms through participation in legislature, Shinde cultivated a spirit of nationalism among the youths from non-brahmans. Urged by Satyashodhak enlightenment already imparted to the rural areas, the young leaders under Shinde's guidance organised the peasant agitation against Small Holdings Bill, on the lines of Gandhian Satyagraha. Shinde stressed the importance of working in co-operation with the National Congress in political matters. The youths such as Keshavrao Jedhe, Anand Swami, Dinakarrao Javalkar, Bhaurao Patil, and V. R. Shinde himself joined the national movement of Civil Disobedience and collected a good following from non-Brahmans. By this participation, Shinde inaugurated the removal of the gap between the rural and urban areas in case of political consciousness. The non-Brahmans, as predicted by V. R. Shinde, started coming to the forefront in the national movement. Shinde warned the people as to how even the government of the elected representatives may turn into a corrupt Government. Mere democratic form of government is of no use unless the Government and the officers are determined to look after the real welfare of the backward classes in rural areas.

The national integration-oriented thoughts and activities of Shinde created great enthusiasm for similar activities among a number of associations organised on the basis of caste like Maratha Sahakari Mandal, Matang Jnanodaya Mandal, Sawanta Mali Dharma Fund; and those organised irrespective of caste and religion like Lokamanya Tilak Utsav Mandal, Hind seva Yuvak Samgh, Friends Union, Hindmata Cricket Club etc. In Bombay, on 18 June 1934, about 41 associations and hundred respectable men joined hands together to felicitate shinde on his completion of 61 years of age, and presented him an Address (Manapatra) under the presidentship of Mathuradas Vasanji, as Mahatma Gandhi, who was to preside, could not attend this function.

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APPENDIX

MANAPATRA (AN ADDRESS)*

Karmveer V. R. alias Annasaheb Shinde,

The most revered and honoured Sir,

At the beginning of your 62nd year of age, we, who know how you incessantly worked for the uplift of crores of down-trodden people in India for the last 30 years and created awakening among them, hereby express our gratitude to you.

In 1906, you founded the 'Depressed Classes Mission Society of India' under the presidentship of Justice N. G. Chandavarkar. We are aware as to how happy you must be to see the great difference between the condition of the depressed classes at the time of your founding the Mission and their condition now, when recently Gandhiji founded the Harijan Sevak Sangh. We request you to honour us by allowing us to participate in your joy that the small plant of the D. C. Mission has grown into a huge tree.

Guruvarya Annasaheb, the people in South Maharashtra and Greater Maharashtra have honoured you for your knowledge and wisdom. We know that you do not give any more importance to this honour than only as much as it has helped you in your sacred work.

You were born in a respectable Maratha family. As your parents were well-educated, cultured and religious-minded, they encouraged you in your education. When

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* (Liberal translation of the Address presented to Karmveer Shinde by 41 associations and 100 respectable individuals, in Damodar Thakarsee Hall, Parel, Bombay, on 18th June, 1934).

there were only so few Maratha graduates of progressive views and modest behaviour as can be counted on finger tips, you secured the B.A. Degree. Had you decided likewise you could have secured the L.L.B. degree and would have occupied a high-salaries post. However, your speciality is that even if you had opportunity of receiving education in England, you utilised it not for raising your own status and mixing with the wealthy, and the highly learned and men in position of authority, you dedicated your life to the uplift of the down-trodden and the depressed communities in society.

Sir, you are selflessness and Karmayoga of Geeta incarnate, morality, sacrifice, courage and faith in God are your special virtues that befit a Karmayogi. In developing these virtues Shreeman Sayajirao Maharaj and the Prarthana Samaj were of great help to you. However, this help was more in the nature of admiration for you than as a matter of obligation. Moreover, by helping you their own status was elevated. With your philosophy of Karmayoga, you brought the miseries of the poor and the depressed classes to the notice of the wealthy and the educated, and harnessed their potentialities to establish institutions for the service of the down-trodden people. However, yourself and your family set an example of life-long dedicated service to these classes. Though we are ignorant, our hearts are full of good-wishes for you. Therefore, it is in the fitness of things that you were bestowed the honorific title '**Karmveer**'.

During your stay in Western Countries, you thought over the problem as to how the status of the Eastern Countries could be raised equal in importance to that of the Western Countries. With your creative imagination, your power of observation and your analytical ability, you could acquire knowledge about the missionary organisation, comparative religion, linguistics and Science. Your founding of the institution of Ahalyashrama and your writings fully attest to the achievement in this field. You are a true research scholar in History. Your utilisation of your

intelligence and your abilities in the uplift of the culturally depressed is comparable to that of any foreign missionary. You worked out your movement on the basis of God and Religion and taught the people that if one wants to live well he must be prepared to die. So you are fit to be called 'Reverand'.

Beloved Annasaheb, the fact that the Conference of the International Council of Unitarians and the Liberal Religious thinkers and workers was to be held in India, gives evidence that not only India but also the Western Countries have acknowledged the importance of your work. Shreeman Sayajirao Maharaj honoured you with an award for your valuable social work. By your advocating the principles of Brahmo Dharma you spread true religion and by founding (Kautumbika) Upasana Mandal ycu have spread true devotion for God among the masses.

Vitthalrao, you practised pursuit of Truth even in politics. You did not even care for your own health while conducting the movement against the Small Holdings Bill. It was because of your holding the Maharashtra Depressed Classes Mission conference (1912) under the presidentship of Dr. Bhandarkar and the Conference of All-India untouchability League (1918) under the presidentship of Shreeman Sayajirao Maharaj that the claims of the Depressed classes to political rights were established and proved to be the first step towards their acceptance by all. Knowing fully well, that illiteracy and enforced prostitution are obstacles in the enjoyment of civic rights, you concentrated your attention on compulsory education and prohibition of **Murali.** These activities give evidence of your idealism and humanitarianism. True politics is also an instrument of social service. We humbly state the undeniable fact that just as Gandhiji desires Swaraj for the benefit of the poorest of the country, you too, had the same ideal before you.

Sir, your faith that 'the abolition of unfouchability is a social, economic and political need of the country', is now being spread among the people by Gandhiji, who is

persuading the people that unless the supposedly untouchables are given free access to the temples and sacred places, untouchability will not be abolished. We pray God that He may give you long life to see that Gandhiji completes the mission.

Presented by

Shree Dharmashikshan va Nirashrit Sahayyak Mandal; Maratha Vidyarthi Sahayak Mandal; Savantvadi Samsthan Maratha Samaj; Tarun Mitra Seva Mandal; Lokamanya Tilak Utsav Mandal; Maharashtra Mitra Mandal; Shivaji Vijay Maratha Mandal; Utsahi Tarun Mandal; Maharashtriya Mahar Mahamandal; Tarun Mitra Mandal; Shree Savanta Mali Dharma Fund; Hindu Din Daya Seva; Bharatiya Tarun Sangh, Maratha Sahayakari Mandal; Rashtriya Brahmanetar Sangh; Vishwabandhutwa prasarak Mandal; Satara Zillah Maratha Sangh; Kenjale Desh-Seva Mandal; Paraspara Hitachintak Tarun Mitra Mandal; Maratha Kshatriya Vidya-Vardhak Mandal; Shree Chendvana Paraspar Sahayakari Mandal; Shree Laxmi-Narayan Vyayam Shala; New Hindmata Cricket Club; Maratha Shikshak Samiti; Taluka Chiplun Yadav Kulotpanna Paraspar Sahayak Mandal; Dadar Krida Mandal; Matang Jnanoday Samaj; Tarun Bharat Vyayam Mandir; Hind Seva Yuvak Sangh; Arya Samaj; Friends Union; The Kamathipura Volunteer Core; Rohidas Swayamsevak Mandal; Bhakti-Pradarshak Sant Namadev Mandali; Telgu Bal-Jnan Uttejak Samaj; Maratha Aikuechhu Sabha; Rohidas Vaktrutva Mandal; Navamatvadi Asprishya Tarun Mandal and others.

Chapter IX

IN SEARCH FOR TRUTH

Karmaveer Shinde was certainly a man of action and at the same time, was also a thinker of ideas. He was able to express his ideas eloquently and effectively through his speeches and writings. He was a trained missionary and had developed the habit of systematic work. He wrote his speeches and discourses fully before he delivered them. Most of them came to be published later on along with his other writings. Thus, today we have a sizable mass of literary output which throws light on various aspects of his life.

Shinde's writings have won the admiration of the critics and writers. The Marathi Sahitya Sammelana honoured Shinde by inviting him to inaugurate the exhibition of historical documents in 1930 and to preside over the section of Metaphysics and Sociology in 1935. Shinde was awarded the much coveted prize, 'Shrimant Sayajirao Gaikwad Paritoshika" in 1933. This prize consisted of a thousand rupees cash award and another twelve hundred rupees by monthly payment of Rs. 100|- each. Shinde delivered two lectures on Untouchability and Social Reform at Baroda as required by the terms of the award of this prize. Shinde was thus recognised as one of the eminent thinkers and writers of Maharashtra. It is therefore desirable to attempt here at least a brief review of his speeches and writings.

For the sake of convenience of discussion, Shinde's speeches and writings can be grouped thus:

(1) The Memoirs; (2) Theistic Directory; (3) Essays; (4) Travel accounts; (5) Speeches; (6) Research; and (7) Philosophical discourses.

(1) The Memoirs

Of all his writings, Shinde's **Memoirs** are the most valuable for our purpose, as they are the basic source for this study. Since they have been referred to often, only a brief note is given here.

V. R. Shinde started writing his memoirs in 1930, during his term of imprisonment. He could complete only 23 chapters there. The remaining part was dictated by Shinde to his son, Ravindra who refreshed his father's memory by reading to him various reports and newspaper accounts. The work was actually completed when Shinde was on his death-bed.[1] This was published in parts first and later on in a volume in 1958.

Shinde's memoirs, **'Mazya Athavani Va Anubhava'**, form a complete account of his life and work. He narrates the story of his life in all details and gives an account of his work in various fields of socio-religious reform. As such it is most valuable for any student of the period. However. as V. B. Kolate in his preface to this work points out, Shinde avoids all references to conflicts and controversies which were inevitable in public life. This omission has deprived the student of history of the opportunity of understanding these controversies from the person who was involved in them. But Kolate justified Shinde's omission by pointing out that he had no bitterness towards his critics or opponents and therefore, he had refrained himself from commenting on them. In a way, Shinde by his silence leaves the reader free to judge for himself.

(2) The Theistic Directory

In December, 1912, V. R. Shinde compiled and published the **"Theistic Directory and the Liberal Religious Thcught and Work in the Civilized World"** to fill in the gap that had been caused by the discontinuation of the publication of P. C. Muzumdar's **Theistic Annual** and S. D. Collet's **'Brahmo Year Book'**. The Theistic Annual was published by P. C. Muzumdar between 1872 to 1879. and 'The Brahmo Year Book' was published by S. D. Collet between 1876 to 1887. Both of them collected in-

formation about the working and the progress of the Brahmo Samaj in India. This information was useful not only to the workers of the Brahmo Samajas but also to those preaching Christianity and other religions. Since 1887, there was no such publication. In 1905, V. R. Shinde was encouraged by other Brahmo Samajists and the members of All India Theistic Conference, to undertake the work of compiling the Directory of Brahmo Samajas. Shinde felt disappointed when in spite of his repeated requests, he could not get necessary information from a number of Samajas, and he had almost dropped the project twice. However, when it was decided to hold the International Conference of Liberal Religions in India in 1914, Shinde made a concerted effort for compiling "The Theistic Directory" and got it published in December, 1912.

The Theistic Directory was compiled in two parts. The first part consisted of the history of the Liberal Religious Movements in Bengal, Punjab, Southern India, Western India, Khasi Hills, Japan, Persia, Europe, England and America. Shinde persuaded Pandit Shivanath Shastri of Bengal, Lala Raghunath Sahai of Punjab, Babu Umesh Chandra Chaudhari of Cherapoonji (Khasi Hills), K. J. Desai of Arya Samaj, V. Padam Raj Naidu of Madras and Zenno Suke Toya Saki of Japan to write the accounts of movements in their regions. Shinde himself wrote the acount of the movement in Western India, the All India Theistic Conference, the Depressed Classes Mission Society of India, the movement in Persia, Liberal Christianity in Europe, and Unitarianism in England and America.

The second part of the Directory gives in brief information of 101 Brahmo Samajas in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, 32 Brahmo Samajas of Madras Presidency, 16 Prarthana Samajas of Bombay Presidency, 18 Brahmo Samajas of Punjab and United provinces, and Rev. Charles Voysey's Theistic Church in London. The account is furnished with the information about the name and address of Secretary, the number of members, the frequency

of the meetings, the Mandir, the publications and machinery of propaganda.

The work was of great value to the workers in the field of Religion. The Directory was in great demand from the religious institutions in foreign countries. They expressed their admiration for Shinde's work without reservations.[2] V. R. Shinde's expectation that "The story of the struggles in the distant and obscure corners of this land, even their failures as well as the messages of hope and goodwill hailing from far beyond the seas will cheer up the drooping heart of the practcial workers in the field" was fulfilled particularly in case of the foreign countries. However, Shinde was disappointed to see that in India itself, in spite of free distribution of its copies, very few people appreciated the effort.

This work is a remarkable contribution to the literature of the Liberal Religious Movement in the world. The Theistic Church in India was yet a cry in the wilderness. But the cause of this church was considered worthy by Shinde. For him to be a follower of it, and help God's cause of oneness of the human spirit, was itself the highest happiness and privilege.

(3) Essays

During the period between 1901 to 1903, when Vitthalrao stayed in England, he wrote short essays describing his experience of English life, and his visits to certain places in England as Notre Dame Da La Gard Church, British Museum, the orphanage, a school in the Burton village, Triennial Unitarian Conference, Coal-mine, Lake Country and Scotland. These essays were first published in the 'Subodha Patrika', and later on collected and published in 1912, by B. B. Keskar, under the title **'Vitthal Ramji Shinde Yanche Lekha, Vyakhayane Va Upadesha'.** These essays reveal Shinde's literary ability as well as capacity of observation. He had an eye for useful information and he was always ready to learn from his experiences and observations. Shinde was much impressed by the clean and holy atmosphere of the Church of the Notre Dame La Gard. Suddenly he recalls to his mind Hindu temples with their dilapidated condition, lack of

cleanliness, tasteless decoration on the wall, etc. The idol in the temple besmeared with oil and **Shindur** loses its divinity. Shinde felt very much disappointed about the wall-paintings of Indian temples. He points out that, Puranas do not lack in the stories of kindness, nobility, and of devotion. Nor is there in our country any dearth of good painters. Yet, the paintings that are done on the temple-walls are done by third-rate painters and the paintings consist of obscene and indecent scenes, of wars and killings. We can improve the situation by painting the scenes as that of Krishna's service to his devotees as Arjuna and Draupadi, Vitthal's service to Janabai and Sakhubai, sacrifice of Gautam Buddha, reform of Nanak, Kabir's love for Truth and devotion of Tukaram for Vithoba. Vitthalrao was equally impressed to see the organisation of the orphanage that grouped the children on the basis of age and sex, and educated to develop brotherly and sisterly affection for each other. They were trained to earn their livelihood independently as they came of age. The men of status in the city did not consider it below their dignity to have connections with the orphanage and visited the orphanage often, establishing affectionate relations with the Children. Shinde was rather surprised to see the need for an orphanage in England where there was freedom of marriage and remarriage. He felt that the English did not have real sympathy for the unmarried mother. He was sorry to see this. Shinde was aware how much more horrifying was the problem of unmarried mothers in India, how much more reform Indians had still to achieve in this direction. While visiting the village school in Burton village, Shinde considered it worthy to communicate to Indians how even a village primary school in England was introducing children to arts, physical training, moral training, technical training and literary education. His visit to coal-mines made him inform his Indian readers how the English people were turning the most unhealthy conditions in the mines less miserable and how the industrial progress was not without its miseries.

Shinde threw light on the commercial skill of the Englishmen, their celebration of victory, their observation

of Good-Friday, their assertion of religious freedom; their skill in building up religious organisations, commercial organisations and social organisations; their respects for animal life and their devotion towards the national figures such as Wordsworth and Shakespeare. Shinde's short essay, **'Janatuna Vanat ani Parat'** (Retiring to forest and return from it), is an eassy possessing great literary and philosophical value. All these essays were considered as transmitting not only knowledge of a foreign country but also transmitting theism to atheist and hope to the dismayed.

(4) Travel Accounts

The travel accounts written by Shinde have a special appeal of their own. Shinde's important travel accounts are: 'Jalapravasa (the sea journey from Bombay to England) and visits to London, Mangalore, Bangalore, Bengal, Burma and Malabar. Shinde travelled very widely. When he was a student in Manchester College, he spent his vacation in visiting the city of London, the city of Paris, Southern part of England, Holland, Switzerland and Italy. Shinde travelled in India in connection with the work of Theistic Conference, of Prarthana Samaj and of Brahmo Samaj. He visited Burma as well. While travelling Shinde noted the religious and social condition of the people in these various regions. Shinde showed interest in historical monuments and relics too.

The account of the "Sea Journey to England", the visit to Mangalore, the visit to Bangalore and the visit to Bengal were published in 'Subodha Patrika' and were collected together in the book, "Shinde Yanche Lekha, Vyakhyane Va Upadesha", edited by B. B. Keskar and published in 1912. His journey from Malabar to Poona was published in 'Manoranjan Masika', in 1925. After his journey in Burma, Shinde narrated his observations of the condition of Buddhism and social conditions in his memoirs, **(Mazya Athavani Va Anubhava)**. The account of condition of "Untouchables in Brahmadesha" was presented by V. R. Shinde in the form of a research paper to the 'Bharat Itihas Sanshodhaka Mandal' on 31-5-1927 and was published in **'Navakala'** of 23-6-1927. Shinde's

"Journey in East Bengal" (1st September to 14th November 1928), is described by him in his Memoirs while the account of progress of higher education among the Namashudras in East Bengal was published in 'Jagruti', weekly edited by Bhagavantrao Palekar of Baroda. It was republished in 'Bahishkrit Bharat' as well.

In his travel accounts of Europe, Shinde throws a flood if light on progress in moral life attained by Domestic Mission, South place Morality Association, and the Methodists in England, in carrying the religious service to the lower classes. He mentions that narrow religious ideas of the French Catholics affected women's education and their freedom. It also affected the sense of morality as many couples could not get married due to the too costly religious ceremony of marriage and the legal bindings on marriage. Shinde also traced the causes of immorality in France to military conscription of youths at the age of 21 and the free movement of pleasure-seeking foreigners in Paris.[3] Shinde describes the cleanliness and neatness of the Dutch village. A history scholar, as Shinde was, he felt great joy in having a view of the Versailles palace of Louis XIV, the paintings depiciting crusades and Napoleon's achievements, the statutes of Moses and St. Paul, and the Pope and his palace in Italy.

Shinde's tours in Bangalore noted the halfway influence of western culture on the Dravidian population.[4] Shinde noted that the population of 40 thousand was divided by the diversity of religions—Hindu, Islam and Christianity, as well as by that of languages — Tuluva, Kannada, Malayali, Konkani. The situation was rather disturbing for the national unity of India. Still Brahmo Samaj and R. K. Rangrao were making efforts to bring about a sort of unity. His 'Journey of Bengal' passed through Jagannath Puri. Shinde narrated his reaction to the crafty behaviour of the priests in the temples and the obscene scenes on the temple walls.[5] Shinde's visit to kali-temple evoked in him a feeling of disgust and horror at the sight of the cruel sacrifice of lambs in the temple. Shinde noted the decline of Brahmo religion in Bengal and Bihar after the death of Keshubchandra Sen. Shinde

also describes his own attempts to re-kindle the spirit of Brahmo religion to some extent during his visits.

Shinde visited Burma in 1927 to see and experience the practices of Buddhism, and to observe the casteless Buddhist Burmese society. In his observance of the religious practices Shinde notes, with admiration, the facilities for meditation in the Buddhist Viharas. He made it a point to discuss the Burmese practice of eating the meat of dead animals with a Burmese Scholar, Taw Sin Ko. Shinde was satisfied to get the answer that in using this kind of meat for eating, the important points is its hygienic purity. Whether the meat is of the animal that was killed for the purpose, or of the animal that died in an accident is not important.[6] The point of eating meat of dead animals was of special interest to Shinde, because it was for this reason that Hindus were not ready to admit the untouchables in caste Hindu society. He noted that the primary education with moral training was sperad very widely in Burma because primary schools were conducted by the Viharas in urban and rural areas. He was surprised to see that though caste system did not exist in Burma, there was a class of untouchables. He found that women in Burma were enjoying predominance over men in social and economic matters. However, in religion **Bhikshunis** had a lower position as compared to the **Bhikshus.** This, Shinde traced to the Indian practices carried over there by Indian monks. Marriage and divorce were very simple matters in Burma. But the married life was not dissolute. Shinde traced the absence of prostitution in Burma to the simplicity of marriage and divorce.

In his account of his travel in Malabar, Shinde discribed the matriarchal system prevalent among the Nayars in Malabar and the Anuloma marriage between Nambudri Brahmans and the Nayars. In case of women, Shinde noted the custom that women of lowest castes had to remove the garment covering their breasts in honour of men from higher castes whenever they came across these men.

He also wrote a description of the journey from Mangalore to Poona under the title, **"Sahyadri Varun"**, (from the ranges of Sahyadri), for the **'Manoranjan'** **Masik.** This essay was published in two parts in the issues of September and October, 1925. The essay describes, Shinde's journey from Mangalore via Mudbidri, Karikal, Shimoga, Harihar to Poona. This region was previously the scene of conflict between Buddhism, Jainism, Shaivism and Vaishnavism. In 1925, when Shinde travelled through it, it was completely secluded from the movements of National Congress and religious reform. Shinde noted Mudbidri and Karikal as centres of Jainism where very fine sculpture flourished during medieval times. Shimoga was noted by Shinde for its sheer seclusion from modern reforms, while Harihar attracted Shinde's attention for the inscriptions of the Mediaeval ruling powers who fought against one another with intense hatred, but noted their achievements in one and the same temple, the temple of Harihar. Harihar was the place where Vaishnavism and Shaivism joined together in one and the same image—Harihar-Shiva and Vishnu.

(5) Research

In the field of research, Shinde wrote a number of articles on topics related to history, culture, philology, religion and sociology. However, his major work is his book, **'Bharatiya Asprishyatecha Prashna'**, which was planned in two parts but only one part was published.

His articles, **"Indian Civilization"**, and **Marathyanchi Purva Pithika athava Ratha Vamshotpatti Vishayi Shastriya Vichar"**, (Scientific thoughts on origin of Marathas or the origin of **Ratha** Race)), are based on his limited study of the Arya-Dravida problem and anthropological articles of his day. He attempted in these articles to refute the superiority of the Aryans and to emphasize the contribution of the Dravidians to Indian culture. His identification of some castes as Dravidian, some communities as Aryan is more speculative and dogmatic than scientific. These articles have no relevance to-day as the very problem of the Aryans and Dravidians has lost its importance.

Shinde's lectures on the 'Development of the Bhagavata Dharma' deserve to be noted. He planned to write a 'History of Religion in India'. With this view he prepared the outline of it. In 1925, he wrote down the summary of the proposed work in 5 parts and presented it before the public in a series of 5 lectures between 24th July to 31st August 1925.[7]

The summary of these lectures is as follows:

The Vedic religious practice of Aryas was like a small stream that poured into the ocean of religious practices evolved by Mongals, Dravidas and others in India. The influence of the other religious practices on the Vedic Aryans brought about the religious practices of Upnishads; and it became the religion of the higher strata of the Society. The Vedas emphasised the **Karma Marga** (Yajna), while the Upnishads emphasised **Jnana Marga** (knowledge about Brahman). The non-Aryan religious practices of the **Bhagavata** sects of Shiva Bhagavat and Devi Bhagavat emphasised the principle of **Bhakti** (Devotion) and **Sraddha** (the faith that the deity would bless the devotee with peace and prosperity).

Afterwards the Jaina Bhagavata, Buddha Bhagavata and Satvata as well joined the rank of the cult of devotion. In addition to devotion to Buddha, Buddha Bhagavata emphasised the importance of morality. This speciality of Buddhism appealed the most to Ashoka Maurya in the 3rd century B.C. When he spread the composite humanitarian religion in India, he gave importance to the teachings of morality of Buddhism. In the following period due to contact with Greeks in 3rd century B.C. to the 1st century A.D., Guru-worship, the temple-organisation, the festivals, and places of pilgrimage, became a common feature of Buddhism and the other Bhagavata sects. In the meanwhile Brahman priests entered the field of these religious practices and established their supremacy in it as they had previously done in the Yajna System. These practices became so popular with Brahmans and the people, that even though Shungas made the effort for the revival of Yajna practice, they could not succeed.

As the **tantra** of image worship and festivals conducted by Brahmans grew static between 2nd century B.C. to 7th century A.D., a new wave of religious reform was started in South India by the Vaishnava Saints—'Alvars' and Shaivite Saints—'Adyars'.

Taking inspiration from this reform movement of simplifying the ritual and democratising the religion, **Varakaries** in the Deccan, **Mahanubhava** in the upper Deccan, **Lingayats** in Karnataka and Chaitanya's **Vaishnavism** in Bengal, started their reform movement in religion. All these sects stressed the importance of devotion, **Jnana**, and **Vairagya**. They opened the worship of the deity in the temple to all castes including untouchables and even Muslims. The Sikhism that later fell in line with the above-mentioned sects was an unique effort to synthesize the religions of both the Hindus and Muslims.

Shinde states that the **Varakari** sect was established in Maharashtra by the joint efforts of Jnandeva—a Brahman out-caste saint, and the shimpi saint Namadeva. This effort enjoyed the patronage of the Yadava ruler of Devagiri. A long array of Saints from different castes made the **Varakari** sect popular. Tukaram completed the work of the organisation of the **Varakari** sect, and it assumed the present form.

Shinde showed great admiration for the reform movement of Bhagavata religion for transcending the caste-distinctions, and for securing direct communion between the deity and the devotee. The movement has the important feature of collective effort in spiritual life and the spirit of equality of all as the children of God.

It is difficult to accept all the statements of Shinde to-day. Yet, these lectures reveal Shinde's profound interest in the subject and his painstaking study of whatever source-material he could get. His analysis and interpretation lack the rigor of a trained Indologist. The same is true of his major work on the problem of untouchability.

Bharatiya Asprishyatecha Prashna

Shinde completed writing of his research work **Bharatiya Asprishyatecha Prashna**, (the problem of untouch-

abiiity in India) in 1933. This research work of Shinde was the first of its kind in Maharashtra. Though certain European scholars as Ibbetson, Senart, Risley and Indian scholars like Bhandarkar have made casual reference to this problem, a comprehensive work on this topic has not yet been written. Shinde planned the book in two vclumes. The first discussed the origin and development of practice of untouchability in India and the second planned to discuss the measures for the removal of untouchability. The first volume was published in 1933. The second volume could not be written due to the ill-health of Shinde. However, Shinde discussed the measures for removal of untouchability in his lectures.

Shinde gave the definition of untouchability as the practice of putting a bane of untouchability on a people, fixing their residence near the colony of the superiors, and punishing those who broke the practice by social and religious excommunication.[8]

Shinde discussed the origin of untouchability. He stated that untouchability was practiced even by the people of Assyria, Japan and Burma. In India untouchability came to be practiced towards: (i) some of the conquered people; (ii) towards the unfaithful; (iii) towards people following lowly professions; (iv) forest people living in backward conditions; and (v) criminals.

Relying on his study of Vedic literature, Shinde says that the practice of untouchability towards chandalas, Vrishalas and Pulkasas is not much found in the Samhita and Upanishadic literature. Even Shree-Krishna period gives indication of marriage relations between caste society and chandalas. However, from the period of the Buddhist age onwards untouchability became widely prevalent and rigid,[9] and harsh rules came to be laid dcwn prescribing rules of conduct towards untouchables in Manusmriti. Shinde said untouchability was also prevalent among the people other than the followers of Vedic religion, and as the intimacy between these two sections developed the followers of Vedic religion also accepted the practice.[10] During the Middle Ages, Shinde states, that untouchability came to be fixed on many of

the Buddhists. Buddhists were enjoying religious supremacy. When they were routed by Muslisms, they were also thrown out as untouchables by the ruler Ballala Sen who reorganised the society in Bengal. Thus, Bathuris in Bengal and Orissa became untouchables.[11] In the south, Shinde continued, the Buddhists and Jains were persecuted by Shaiva rulers as Kanha Pandya. In the Deccan, the Marathas, for economic reasons, deprived the original rulers Mahars and Mangs of their possessions and fixed them in the Baluta system. In the south, the Nambudris and Nayars deprived the Tiyyas and Yezwas of their possessions and put them into untouchability and slavery.[12]

Here Shinde's views were supported by the writings of Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad Shastri in Bengal and professors of Vijaynagar College V. Sheshagiri Rao, M. S. Ramaswami Ayyangar, Olcott and Shinde's own observation of 33 untouchable communities.

During modern times, Shinde says, that untouchables were employed by Muslim rulers and Marathas and the British in the army; but the British later removed them from army. While describing the nature of untouchability, Shinde states, that untouchability was practised not only in social relationship but also in cemetery and public water places, temples and even roads leading to temples.

Though Shinde could not write the second volume, he discussed the measures for removal of untouchability through his various speeches. In the Satara Samajik Prantika Parishad (1925), Shinde said, "the removal of untouchability is now no more a problem to be understood, but a problem to be solved with will or determination". The caste people exploited the untouchables for their social organisation or comforts and the diplomats exploited them for their political strategy. Shinde advised that the distance between colonies of untouchables and caste-society must be abolished. Unless that was done all other measures as 'temple-entry movement', 'opening of water-reservoirs' etc. were like applying medicine externally when the disease is spreading deep inter-

nally. While talking about his research work on untouchables, Shinde said, "Even though the work of social service to untouchables is left aside, and only the work of research in the problem of untouchability is taken into consideration, I may say that the experience and the joy that I got in it was very great. If I am required to take another rebirth, I am prepared to spend them in this research and service to untouchables."[13]

Shinde was greatly interested in comparative study of languages. He wrote an article on the relationship between Marathi and Kannada for the book **'Marathi Bhashechi Ghatana'** (the development of Marathi language), published in 1923. R. B. Joshi, the author, adds a special note that V. R. Shinde was the most appropriate philologist to take up the writing of this article on account of his deep study of Sanskrit, Pali, Marathi and Kannada. The same article was published in **'Kesari'**, (30th October to 14th December, 1923) and in **Shinde Lekha Sangraha** edited by M. P. Mangudkar as well. In this article Shinde states, how Marathi previously an undeveloped language, was enriched by the vocabulary of nouns and verbs, rules of grammer, construction of sentences and style by the influence of Kannada language during the period between 4th century A.D. to 1000 A.D. In 1926, V. R. Shinde's article **"Konkani Va Marathi"** (Konkani and Marathi), was published in **Vividhajnana-Vistar** of July, 1926. In this article, Shinde expressed his view that Konkani is a dialect of Marathi.

On 29th December, 1929, V. R. Shinde delivered his famous speech on the "Importance of the Comparative Study of Languages" under the auspices of 'Sahavicharini Sabha' of Baroda. The weekly **'Jagruti'** of 21st January, 1930, reported as to how "V. R. Shinde showed the resemblance, and relationship in the words not only from ancient languages as Sanskrit, Prakrit and Dravidian languages in India but also that of Tibetan, Burmese, Chinese, Latin, Greek, Pharsee, Hebrew, Chaldean and the modern languages such as French, German, English and Danish. This speech of Shinde, though it dealt with dry topic of comparative language, was made pleasant and interesting dut to Shinde's sense of humour. As a result of this

speech, **'Gujarat Bhasha-Shastra Mandala'**, was founded there and then, by passing a resolution for it.[14] In 1931, while the work of compiling **Maharashtra Shabda Kosha** was going on, Shinde made a suggestion that "an advisory committee should be appointed for the work of **Marathi Shabda Kosha,** and the Committee should consist of learned members each one of whom should know at least one non-Aryan language". According to this suggestion, the committee consisting of Principal Rajwade, Modak Shastri, Kulkarni, and V. R. Shinde was appointed.[15]

Shinde's interest and study of the Maratha history were brought to light in his article on the role of the Peshwas in the history of the Marathas. He was asked to write this article by N. C. Kelkar,[16] Editor of **Kesari** just to record a sort of corrective to the biased views of Jadunatha Sarkar who maintained in his article that Peshwas brought glory to Maharashtra by their imperial designs. Shinde showed in his article how the zealous but misguided policy of Nanasaheb actually turned the history of Marathas towards a fruitless endeavour, neglecting the welfare of the masses. Shinde also emphasized that the Peshawa was assisted in his conquests by the Maratha noblemen—Holkar, Shinde, Bhosle, Gaekwad and others.

In his introduction to **Radha Madhava Vilas Champu,** V. K. Rajwade made some uncharitable remarks about the Marathas, Jains and the Lingayats. V. R. Shinde wrote four articles in the Vijayi Maratha to refute these remarks and took Rajwade to task.[17] This reveals Shinde's courage of convictions and great respect for communal harmony.

(6) Speeches

Shinde, a socio-religious reformer and a nationalist, was required to participate in a number of Conferences and also presided over a number of them. Shinde's speeches in these Conferences were prepared before hand. They were again neatly written and published. His speeches in the peasant Conferences are memorable for the concrete suggestions that were given by him for organising associations of the peasants and workers. His

speech in the **Prantika Samajika Parishad** was a comprehensive speech covering all the social problems and giving guidance for solving them.

Philosophical Discourses

V. R. Shinde was primarily a man of religion and his mission was to spread among the people, especially of the lower orders, the light and love of God. His most favourite method of inculcating the religious spirit was that of holding collective prayers or **upasana** in which men, women and children participated. On such occasions, Shinde would deliver a brief discourse **(updesha)**, in which he would expound a philosophical tenet, a moral principle or principles of self government. These were usually written out earlier and therefore, they would be fully thought out and became thought provoking essays. Summaries of some of these discourses delivered between 1903-1912 were first published in **Subodha Patrika** and later on were included in the collected works of Shinde, edited by B. B. Keskar. These have won for Shinde the admiration of not only the men of faith but also of professional thinkers. Some of Shinde's dicourses are briefly reviewed here and they reveal his philosophy of life.

Shinde discussed some of the important and difficult philosophical ideas in his **updeshas** such as 'Religious **awakening'** (dharma jagruti), 'God and Faith', 'Pilgrimage of the soul', 'The solace of the soul', 'What is Death?', 'The importance of Repeating God's name' and 'the Need of Sangha of Religion'. He described religious awakening as cultivating faith in the existence of God, to surrender oneself to him and to do the service that God has allotted to oneself. Religious awakening is not to be interpreated as religious bigotry or desecration of other's religions.[18] While discussing, 'God and Faith', Shinde says. "God is a spirit and does not have any form. But it is not inactive. God is active. The Good virtues and Bad vices are but different stages of the same instincts and emotions. They are employed by God for helping evolution and development. The individual has not only to have positive faith in God, but also he must actively sup-

port the truth and must believe that there would be no loss neither to him nor to anybody else in his sticking to truth. It is through believing in truth and supporting the truth one is related with God."[19]

While discussing the 'Pilgrimage of soul' Shinde says that an individual has to achieve four **purusharthas, artha, kama, dharma and moksha.** Artha is the means of attaining kama and dharma. Kama is desire of the soul to attain something higher. It is kama that has made the scientists to achieve inventions and disccveries. It has made the artists to produce excellent pieces of arts and the philosophers to propagate new philosophies of life. Kama needs to be complemented by the duty-consciousness or Dharma. It is the duty-consciousness or Dharma on the part of the individual, that brings about the spread of new philosophies propagated by philosophers and the inventions made by the scientists. It is through the unity of Kama and Dharma that the fourth Purushartha automatically follows. God gets his wishes and desires fulfilled through men. Not only the scientists and poets are required for the service of God, but also the executors of their schemes who spread knowledge all over the world.[20] It is this "consciousness that God gets his desires fulfilled through me" gives a great solace and relief to the soul. While discussing the "Solace of the Soul" Shinde refers to the philosophy of the French philosopher, Bergson. Bergson says that there is 'elan vital' (life force) which exists in all living beings high and low; in human beings it appears as intellect, while in lower animals it appears as instinct. This very "Impulse" generates "love and dutifulness" among the living beings. Nobody knows the purpose for which this Vital Impulse works. However, the consciousness that the universal power is working in this world along with the soul is a great relief and solace to the soul.[21]

The practice of the principles of purity, freedom and equality are very essential for gaining awareness of God's existence. Shinde believed in the principle of **Dwaita.** While discussing the 'Relationship between God and man'

Shinde says, that man must have respectful devotion to God. He must know that God is eternal while he is ephemeral. God is almighty while man is weak. God is just, while man tends to be unjust. Man must leave all pretensions and should cultivate true devotion to God.[22] Shinde believed not in renunciation (**Nivritti**), but doing of one's own duties without desiring any advantage from it (**pravratti or Karmayoga**). He also did not believe in incarnation of God to take place, but evolution of all the mankind to a higher level (**Vikas Vada**). He desired the development of the virtues of concentration, sincerity and honesty, unselfishness, courage, dedication and resolution on the part of every man so that he could be fit for this evolution.[23]

While discussing 'What is Death?' Shinde says, "Death seems to be a somewhat surprising and horrifying aspect of human life. Some consider it as a bridge joining the two aspects of life—worldly life and other-worldly life". Shinde utilises the 'theory of evolution of one's own life (Vikas), even in explaining Death. "As a man goes on developing broader view on his life, he drops down the distinction between individual and family, individual and caste, and individual and the world. His limited vision of life comes to an end, gradually. Death does not necessarily mean leaving one's own body. By leaving one's body willingly, one also gives up his love of his body. Death is the end of limited view of life and the awakening of soul, who does not like to be restricted in its movement by the "Satchel of skin and bone". So death is not something inauspicious or sad. It is the state of highest happiness. However, for achieving this kind of death one has to prepare himself like Gautam Buddha, Devendranath Tagore and others. This kind of death is possible for every human being".[24]

Shinde, a Brahmo Samajist and follower of Liberal religion, believed that the conflict between science and religion is resolved during modern times. Dharma has its basis in Faith, while the basis of science in Intellect. Science has certain limitations in its advance, while re-

ligion that is based on Faith can achieve stupendous advance.

While discussing the "Importance of Dharma of congregation, and conference of Religion, Shinde says, "Congregation of religion is essential for keeping religion active. But the congregation must not work as a mediation between God and individual. The work of the congregation is to make the individual independent in his religious pursuit. The Conference of Religion is essential for giving mutual help and co-operation for achieving further advance in religion which is an unending work." While describing the importance of Congregation (Dharma Sangha) Shinde says:

> "In India, the work of Dharma Sangha is very much slackened. Dharma Gurus, here, collect the **dakshina** from the people. Indians who are desirous of political Swarajya, are not interested in, 'Swarajya in religion'. In India philosophy is rusted, there is no religious education. In Europe the Church Organisation is quite alert. When people don't agree with a particular way of established religion they establish another sect. The Church is giving religious instructions to the young generation. It shows special interest in the delinquent youths and shows different ways for their rehabilitation. It is the Church that develops character and personality and produces statesmen, poets, and the brave. The country that does not have the Religious Congregation, lacks in heroes. Even if a hero is born, he does not get the required followers because the country lacks in character. Even if some important work is achieved by that hero, the people in the country show no enthusiasm for constructing memorials to him."[25]

Character of a man, Shinde argues, must lead him to perform all his duties—family, social, political and humanitarian—sincerely, regarding them as duties towards God. This is, he says, **Karmayoga.** Shinde tries to show that a man of knowledge is not at all superior to one of duty. A jnana-yogi might gain more knowledge but what is its use unless he employs it for the good of the people?

Karmayogi is the friend of all because he serves through his action God and Community.[26]

But one need not be proud or arrogant about his service to the people. One must rise above praise, criticism or slander which some people have the pleasure of showering upon you with or without reason. One should listen to his conscience and fearlessly do his duty.[27]

So it is with charity. Why boast over your generosity when you give something? Charity should be regarded as a form of repayment of debt. The society is based on the principle of 'give and take'. Shinde insisted that respectful treatment of others and compassion towards those who suffer were the two wordly ways of getting salvation. Such a friendly attitude is an essential attribute of the devotion to God.[28]

Performance of one's duties in a spirit of detachment and an attitude of affection towards all were the two basic principles to guide the individual in his spiritual journey. In fact, Shinde did not have any sympathy for the otherworldly attitude which implied negligence of wordly life. Shinde was one of those who believed that salvation or **moksha** could be attained only through one's fulfilling all wordly obligations. As such, it is significant that Shinde stressed this point of view in most of his discourses. In one of his talks, he has given a new interpretation of the character of Avalai, the wife of the renowned saint, Tukarama.[29] Tukarama, as is well known, was a **brahmajnani** but according to Shinde, he neglected his worldly life. All his physical needs and comforts were looked after by his devoted wife, Avalai who is traditionally depicted as a stupid, cantankerous woman engrossed in this Samsara (worldly life). But actually, Shinde points out, it is more difficult to fulfil one's social obligations than to seek one's own salvation. Without Avalai, what would Tukarama have achieved? Indeed, Avalai was a lady or great understanding and courage, who looked after the family and thereby helped her husband to pursue his spiritual sadhanaa. This view is really thought-provoking and is based on sound spiritual experience.

Shinde showed in his life and in all his discourses and writings great respect for women. The woman in her role of the mother, is the real architect of social progress. This point he brilliantly made in his **phatka** (an appreciative poem) on the life of Jijabai. He has described therein how Jijabai gave courage and inspiration to her son and his followers and guided them to found swarajya.[30] Shinde calls her the Mother of Maharashtra. Shinde gave expression to his profound devotion to the Mother of Universe in his poem '**Ayi Manamohini**'[31] which Janakka sang at his **upasana.** Shinde pours his heart thus :

"Mother, your spirit has filled my heart, this sky and this earth. You are always young, beautiful and fearless. You have compassion for the sinful. Then how is it that I alone am not yet relieved from this painful existence? I am always in search of you everywhere. I have only one request : Keep me at your feet in my birth, life-time and death!"

This poem reveals the mystic aspect of V. R. Shinde's personality and as such is really valuable.

Shinde made use of this devotion to the Mother to propagate an attitude of respect towards women and to inculcate among the people the spirit of harmony and unity. Indeed, he drew upon the stories of gods, goddesses, saints and heroes to emphasize the spirit of unity which was the most urgent need of the time. In his discourse as early as 1927 in Burma, Shinde exhorted the people to unite and co-operate with each other. He cited the examples of Ramdasa, Shivaji and Tanaji, Saints and heroes. He said, they were the real soldiers in the struggle of life and they always fought for the welfare of others. To dedicate one's life to the service of society is the real spiritual struggle.[32]

Shinde emphasized as already stated, the goal of the life of an individual is purushartha consisting of **dharma, artha, kama** and **moksha.** But how can individuals realise this goal? Shinde believes that one can realise the goal by conducting oneself in the most selfless way in life. For this, the individual has to be trained properly, by the

parents, the teacher, the government and by oneself. Self restraint is most important. These forms of training were discussed Shinde in his discourses. Let us see these briefly.

As for the training to be given by father to his child **Pitru Shasana**) Shinde states that the child should be taught restraint but his personality should not be suppressed.[33] He should be helped to develop the original nature into 'Sheel' (character). The human child has been given a longer childhood than the small ones of animals by God, to enable him to attain a brighter manhood in future. It is the affection of parents that gives the real strength to the child's character and his mind will acquire good qualities and virtues.

The **Gurushasana** or the training by teacher should be such that the student is enabled to realize the values of life. This has to be all-sided i.e., intellectual, moral and spiritual.

Shinde in his **'Raj Shasan'** agrees with Ramsay Mec-Donald's view that :

> "the state is the organised political personality of a sovereign people — the organisation of a community for making its common will efficient by political methods."

Shinde says :—

> "The purpose of the governmental administration is to give utmost individual freedom to its citizens. But unless the citizens are disciplined they will not be able to benefit by this. The forest people enjoy freedom but they do not develop capacity to fight against odds. It is the administration that builds up the organisation of a vigorous society, which in due course does not feel the need of the governmental administration for its regulation."[34]

Shinde agreed with Spencer in minimising the governmental administration to only two departments — police

and Foreign affairs, while all the other branches of administration should be managed by the people themselves.

The most important and the most effective is the discipline which Shinde calls, **Vinaya Yoga.** By this only, one can prepare himself to enter the Kingdom of God, or **Nirvana** or **Moksha** or Svarga — whatever one may call it. Self-discipline leads one to widen the circle of happiness to include one and all and to live in complete harmony with the entire creation. Shinde advises the individual to curb one's ego by freely confessing one's weaknesses and failures and by being humble about his or her achievements. One should be generous in appreciating the virtues and good deeds of others and shun from criticism or condemnation. It is not proper to speak publicly of one's adversaries. One should be humble and discuss the doubts and difficulties in the spiritual practice with those who are spiritually advanced. In brief, one should erase his narrow and selfish ego and try to live with his fellow-beings in harmony.[35]

Shinde believes that these forms of training will transform the existing society into a community of brother-hood in which everyone cares for everybody else. It is a society of completely selfless individuals, free from tension and conflict and characterised by goodwill and joy. This is the kingdom of God, to be attained by one and all. This is **Purna Avatara** (complete Incarnation).[36]

In this novel way, Shinde tries to reconcile the Hindu theory of '**Avatara**' with the modern theory of Evolution. The followers of the Liberal Religion including the members of the Prarthana Samaj accept the concept of avatara or incarnation of God but not in any single individual such as Rama or Jesus Christ. They believe that the Almighty whose spirit permeates the entire universe, makes his auspicious, virtuous, and powerful appearance visible to all. In other words, each and every individual can be raised to the status of a visionary. This evolution is possible by the development of human organisation, a composite or total growth. This composite organisation creates a new vital force within itself and this is precisely

the form that God's incarnation takes place. The entire community becomes divine.

This vision of a 'community divine' is perhaps the most democratic interpretation of the spiritual elevation and divine incarnation. In a way, this is a unique vision. By placing such a vision before his followers Shinde gave them new hopes of salvation, strengthened their faith and thus brightened their otherwise sordid lives.

Shinde was thus a visionary and a saint. His ideas on the philosophical issues have attracted the attention of scholars and have won for him a place in the recently published **Marathi Tatvajnana Mahakosha**, edited by D.D. Wedekar. We can conclude this chapter by reproducing here a brief summary of the account given in this prestigious reference work.[37]

> "V. R. Shinde was one of the most prominent thinkers in Maharashtra who undertook a search of relations between God, World, Man and Society."
>
> "Shinde's views on problems of life were the outcome of his study of religious literature, his experience in the practice and propagation of religion as a missionary of Prarthana Samaj and Brahmo Samaj, as well as his experiences during the social and political movements. While he propounded the unitarian philosophy of belief in one Supreme God, he did not subscribe to the Advaita School. He stressed the devotion to God, moral life and unity of all castes and creeds. All this he found in the **Varkari** sect and commended it heartily. Shinde certainly believed in the immortality of soul which is to be guided by God. Devotion, affection and moral purity are the means of achieving salvation."

Shinde was a man God and he sought to remedy social injustices and inequalities by spiritual methods. No wonder, he was affectionately called by many as 'Maharshi'.

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Chapter X

A SAINTLY REFORMER

V. R. Shinde was a man of saintly nature. Though there was every possibility of getting a good lucrative job in Baroda or anywhere else, Shinde turned his back on it. He chose the career of a religious missionary which could not offer him an economically comfortable life. Shinde had to struggle throughout his life — during his educational career, as well as during his missionary life and till the end. However, he never showed any regret or bitterness about it. He considered poverty as his 'fourth sister' along with Janakka, Tanyakka and Chandrakka. His mother had trained him how to live contented even in poverty and Shinde taught the same discipline to his wife, sisters and children. Nor was Shinde handicapped in his activities by the paucity of funds. Shinde believed that when one starts the work of religion, voluntary help comes from someone or the other and the difficulties which seemed to be unsurmountable vanished, soon. Thus, Shinde went on working incessantly in the religious field, social reform and national movement without much difficulty. It was his selfless service that attracted voluntary aid.

Shinde did not expect any personal benefit from any public activity. When Prarthana Samaj was giving him Rs. 60 only per month, Shinde was undertaking very extensive and wide tours for the work of Prarthana Samaj, Theistic Mission and Depressed Classes Mission. Shinde found it very difficult to make both ends meet. even his family members accepted the situation willingly. His mother remained busy in clothing the poor children of

depressed classes, stitching clothes for them from the discarded clothes that were collected from the rich people. Some generous members of Prarthana Samaj as Laxmibai Ranade, D. G. Vaidya, Chandavarkars, Navaranges helped Shinde occasionally. Some of them paid him his salary for two years when he was relieved of his missionary work in the Prarthana Samaj. When Shinde was offered a small pension by the Depressed Classes Mission, he rejected it. It was because he did not like to take money from the fund which he himself had raised for the welfare of the poor depressed classes. However, provision for his livelihood came from Brahmo Samaj, and Shinde could continue his service in other fields such as peasant movement, national movement, **Kautumbika Upasana Mandala,** etc. without any break. Wherever Shinde found humanity suffering, and good cause being neglected, he came forward to serve the cause with all his might. Shinde, though essentially a missionary of Brahmo Samaj, did not consider social work, political movement or peasant movement as outside the pale of his duties. He had an integrated view of life and religion. Shinde's life was an example of observances of the principles of 'Ashtanga Marga' of Buddha, 'Beatitudes of Christ,' and 'Karmamarga of Geeta'. Shinde had absorbed and practised the principles of simplicity, purity, benevolence, mercy, self-control and abstinence from greed and hatred. In his activities, Shinde did come in conflict with some people mainly on matters of principles. However, he never talked ill of anyone, in his private or public life. However, when he saw injustice, intolerance, and crooked behaviour, Shinde never showed tolerance. He attacked these tendencies ferociously with all his power. Thus, V. R. Shinde lived a saintly life and dedicated himself to mitigate the miseries of the unfortunate section in the society.

In the year of his centenary celebration some men of learning have assessed his activities. Some of them see that Shinde's participation in multiple activities could not win that much name and success to Shinde. They feel

that had Shinde worked exclusively in one or two fields, that particular cause or institution would have benefitted, considerably. While there is some truth in this, it can be said, that all these activities which Shinde undertook were constituents of the activity of the liberal religion which was his main concern. This liberal religion was grasped by Shinde from his teacher, Prof. J. Eslin Carpenter. Liberal religion in addition to its ideas of metaphysics with regard to nature of God, his relationship with human beings and the world kept itself concerned with human problems of social justice, popular welfare, temperance, purity and international justice. Shinde imbibed this comprehensive outlook on life and plunged into social service whenever he saw sufferings caused by social injustice, superstition and intolerance. Similar to ancient **Rishis**, who along with their penance and renunciation kept a watchful eye on socio-political matters, Shinde too maintained awareness of the difficulties which poor people were required to face in the practicial life. By helping them through social reform movements such as uplift of depressed classes, uplift of women, and improving the cultural life, economic movement — like peasant movement, the national movement such as that of 1917 and 1930, Shinde fulfilled the social and cultural part of his religious duties. It is only by understanding the basic tenets of the liberal religion that Shinde's religious Mission which he continued uninterrupted can by very well appreciated. Shinde's tolerance of other religious sects, and his close participation in their liberal welfare activities, can be very well grasped if one reads Shinde's paper 'Liberal Religion in India' which he presented in the Amsterdam Conference of 1903 (already reproduced in Appendix to Chapter III). Shinde says, "that the basic principle that actuated him to participate in all these different activities was religion". Thus, it can be said that whatever activity he undertook to ameliorate miseries and sufferings in the society were a part and parcel of his religious mission and were not separate from it.

One of the greatest admirers of Shinde, R. N. Chavan, the present secretary of Wai Brahmo Samaj, describes the activities of Shinde in his personal letter to the author of this thesis in the following words:

> Shinde moved on from Religious activity to the activity of Depressed Classes Mission, he went on further to national movement and peasant movement. In every movement, after completion of his part, he was free to join another movement. It was as if he got salvation (Moksha) from that activity. The feeling of Virakti came up soon, and he did not remain attached to the same activity just for maintaining his authority over it. However, he did not resign from anyone of these activities.
>
> He remained till the end of his life associated with Prarthana Samaj as a member, with the Depressed Classes Mission Society as its Trustee, and with the Wai Brahmo Samaj as its trustee. In spite of the differences of opinion with some of the members, Shinde never hated them or disrespected them in his personal hated them or disrespected them in his personal or public life. On the contrary he referred to them in respectful language.

Thus, one can see how Shinde had established an indivisible correlation between the religious, social and political activities, and how they were regarded as different aspects of his religious life. An important feature of Shinde's religious activity was the correlation that he established between religious activities in different parts of India, and between sects, old and new, the sects of common masses and the classes. The Brahmo movement under Keshubchandra Sen tended to be provincial. Each province had its own brand of Brahmo religion. Under the guidance and leadership of Shinde this separatism was eliminated and correlation between religious activities in different parts of India was brought about by the All India Theistic Conference. Shinde also maintained and promoted the correlation of religious activities in India

on one hand, and the other civilized parts of the world on the other. Shinde established correlation also between the old Varkari Sect and the unitarian sect which was being developed in modern times. The editor of **Marathi Tatwajnan Kosha** has taken note of this achievement of Shinde in developeing correlationship of this kind. In addition to it, it can be added that Shinde himself has described in the inauguration speech of Wai Brahmo Samaj how he established correlationship between Satya Shodhak activity, Prarthana Samaj and Brahmo Samaj in the Wai Brahmo Samaj which he founded in 1933. Thus, Shinde did not make distinction between different sects in religion, nor between social, political and religious activities, so far as the activity concerned itself with the welfare of the mass of the people. This shows that the essential feature of Shinde's life-mission was the establishment of correlationship between different activities and having a comprehensive view of life.

As for Shinde's activity towards the abolition of untouchability, he formed a link between Jyotiba Phule and S. J. Kamble on one hand, and Ambedkar and Gandhiji on the other. Shinde considered this activity as an activity of liberal religion. He desired the association of untouchables with the caste-Hindus as its means and goal. For this Shinde desired to bring about the uplift of the Depressed Classes not merely by education and employment but through their acceptance by the people of caste society among them. Shinde treated the problem of untouchables as an all India problem. For this he founded 'Depressed Classes Mission Society of India'. He founded its branches in different parts of Madras, Madhya Pradesh and Bombay Province, and gave impetus to this activity in Bengal. He correlated the activities of different organisations that worked in different parts of India in the 'All India Depressed Classes Conference' and 'Anti-untouchability League'. The Depressed Classes Conference was not merely of the untouchables but also that of untouchables and their sympathisers. Through the Depressed Classes Mission Society, Shinde worked out cultural uplift of

untouchables, and their association with men and women of higher castes, as well as with the common masses. This social aspect of the work of the service to Depressed Classes which Shinde rendered is admired even by one of his bitter critics, such as M. R. Boads, who in 'Chitramaya Jagat' of January, 1923 said, "Gandhiji could get an immediate success in his work of abolition of untouchability due to the 12 years hard service which Shinde had put in".

Shinde gave special treatment to the problem of depressed classes when the national movement started gathering momentum. Shinde desired that they should not be involved directly in the national struggle of 1917-20. Further, Shinde stressed the point that unless untouchability was abolished India's struggle for freedom would not be a success. The causes for these were twofold: On one side, Shinde feared that the British may separate the untouchables from the caste-Hindus and facilitate further disintegration of the Indian Community and weaken the solidarity of the nation. On the other hand, Shinde felt that if the Swaraj was secured with the problem of untouchability unsolved, it would be shelved in cold-storage due to the domination of the orthodox element. Then, the conflict between untouchables and the caste society would assume greater severity, which would not augur well for national progress. The problem of untouchability was organically related to the larger problem of national unity and progress.

As compared to Shinde's work with the untouchables who were quite innocent, his work among his caste-men, the non-Brahmans, was very difficult. Here Shinde forms a link between Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj and B. V. Jadhav on the one hand and Keshavrao Jedhe, Bhausaheb Hire and Yashwantrao Chavan on the other. The work of national unity which Shinde started was difficult because of the already existing rift between non-Brahmans and the Brahmans. most of whom belonged to the orthodox element of the society. The feeling of separatism expressed by the non-Brahmans was considered to be a serious diffi-

culty in the evolution of our democracy. However, Shinde feared that if the non-Brahman movement was not properly conducted, it would harm the interests of the country as a whole. This came to be realised gradually by important leaders like Shahu Maharaj and Shripatrao Shinde, Sayajirao Maharaj of Baroda and Khaserao Jadhav.

Shinde's founding of the Rashtriya Maratha Sangha with the encouragement of Tilak proved to be a retrograde step in the national progress. The non-Brahman political party of Deccan Rayat Sabha was the Sabha of all non-Brahman Castes. The Satya Shodhaka Samaj as well was exhorting to the dissolution of caste distinctions. In 1915. Shahu Maharaj had encouraged inter-caste marriages. Shinde's Maratha Rashtriya Sangh encouraged Marathas to stand out from the other non-Brahmans. However, afterwards V. R. Shinde, and Shripatrao Shinde, the secretary of Maratha League, understood the futility of this kind of organisation and gave it up. Shinde's sincere effort for national unity impressed Shripatrao Shinde to such an extent that Shripatrao Shinde, who was credited with the work of securing reserved seats for non-Brahmans, joined hands with V. R. Shinde in helping him to contest election not for the reserved seat, but for a general seat. In this contest. Shinde failed to win the seat. However, this effort was a success in forming a powerful group that favoured national unity under V. R. Shinde. This contesting election for a general seat threwup a group of first rate leaders of non-Brahmans such as Shripatrao Shinde, Khaserao Jadhav, Baburao Jedhe, and Keshavaro Jedhe and divided the non-brahman party into old leadership of loyalists and the young militant leaders. Shinde concentrated on this new generation of leaders, guided them in organising movements, and inculcated the spirit of nationalism among them.

The peasant movement guided by Shinde proved to be a three sided achievement. It trained the youths in thinking about the problems of poor peasantry for solving their problems; it organised the movement of the peasants

as a class; it taught the youth the importance of organising a movement on national basis under the auspices of the National Congress. Shinde also attracted their attention to the Satyagraha movement and the importance of Gandhiji's leadership in it. At the end of the peasant movement Keshavrao Jedhe joined the National Congress. Shinde's participation in the Civil Disobedience Movement and his tour in the rural areas for cultivating the spirit of nationalism there. showed a new way for the propaganda of national movement in the villages. Large number of village people joined in the Civil Disobedience Movement and the successive movements afterwards.

Nalini Pandit in her book **Jativad Ani Vargavad** (casteism and theory of classes) gives due credit to Shinde for his guiding the non-Brahman movement on right lines. She says: "Shinde advocated a bold religious policy of monotheism, unity of all castes and uplift of the depressed classes. He opposed the founding of the institution of Kshatra Jagadguru and expressed his opinion that the king (state) should be the final authority in deciding religious disputes." "He organised Bahujana Paksha to achieve the welfare of the peasants and workers, of women and untouchables, through compulsory education, prohibition of drinks and self-determination in social and religious matters".

He had an intense desire that the Marathas should cultivate the spirit of nationalism and participate in the national movement. Shinde's name must be counted among the prominent popular leaders, who struggled hard for inculcating the national spirit, liberty and broad idealism.

Along with inculcating the spirit of nationalism, Shinde felt the need of an integration of different communities speaking different languages, and rural and urban population. He tried to counter to the linguistic division of population by showing how all different languages — Sanskrit or Prakrit, or Aryan or Dravidan are indebted to each other for their development.

V. R. Shinde felt that independence without a truly democratic government would be of little use. No progress could be achieved if the nation reverted to the mediaeval feudal polity. However, Shinde was not alone in thinking on these lines. Indeed, no leader of the national movement, except those with communal bias or supporters of the Indian princes, ever thought of reviving any traditional political institutions.

Shinde's interest in the comprehensive progress of society in general and the **Bahujan Samaj** in particular was immense. Along with the Liberals, Shinde conducted movements for the education of girls, prohibition of drinks, and social reforms. These reforms formed the basis for further improvement. While the Liberals thought more of urban areas, V. R. Shinde's efforts were guided more towards the Bahujan Samaj and rural areas. Speaking on his achievements, R. P. Paranjpe said, "In the history of social reform in India, the future historians will have to give a very important place to V. R. Shinde."

Shinde's writings are an example of neatly arranged thoughts and ideas which Shinde advocated through his speeches and talks. They are products of his sincere desire to achieve the all-sided progress of the entire community on the basis of equality, fraternity and self-determination. His thoughts on various matters are still helpful to those who are interested in social service.

Shinde's work in the field of religion, particularly **Kautumbika Upasana Mandala** and **Wai Brahmo Samaj**, have kept the memory of Shinde alive. This activity could not spread widely on account of the political movement and quick successive changes in the political scene. Since 1930, political activity occupied the entire field of life, not only in Western India but also in the whole of the world. Efforts for social reform and religious reform could not get that much importance as political activity. However, Shinde's ideas of social reform of the Depressed Classes and spread of education among the lower classes and women bore fruits, thanks to the efforts of Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil.

Shinde's efforts towards organising peasant movement and bringing non-Brahmans into the national movement won success considerably. Here he found a number of successors, who fulfilled his dream in bringing representatives of **Bahujan Samaj** to the forefront in the political field.

Shinde's efforts to achieve harmony between social reform, political movement, religious activity, economic movement and literary pursuit is noted by the great political thinker and worker N. G. Gore and the great scholar Tarkatirtha Laxman Shastri Joshi. N. G. Gore says:

> "Shinde had unified the intense desire for social reform, eagerness for political liberty and pursuit of knowledge in his activities to such an extent that he must be regarded as the confluence of the various streams of reforms that appeared in Maharashtra since, 1850".

Tarkatirtha Laxman Shastri Joshi says,

> "V. R. Shinde was very well aware of the inseparable connection between social, religious and political reform. The hierarchical caste-system that makes distinction between one individual and another individual, and one caste and another caste is based on Hindu religion. India will not achieve real social reform unless one accepts the Liberal religion which transgresses the limitations of caste system established by Hindu religion. Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are religions which are imprisoned in their scriptures. It is only the Liberal religion that will release society from these bondages of blind faith. It is only the Liberal World-religion that will slacken the tight grip of these separatist religions. Shinde concentrated on his auspicious religion that will achieve welfare of the world .... Shinde started his career with this World-religion, and going further to social reform, social service, he completed his life's Mission with National resurgence".

In spite of these laudable achievements, Shinde's name seems to be almost relegated to oblivion. Its interesting to examine the causes of this.

There were all sorts of conflicts — communal, economic and national conflicts; conflicts among Satyashodhaka vs. Prarthana Samaj and Arya Samaj in religion; brahmans non-Brahmans or Marathas non-Marathas in social life, capitalists vs. communists, nationalists vs. communalists on social and political level. Vitthalrao was the only person who struggled to bring about rapproachement among them. He belonged to no party. Still even in the work of rapproachement, he was misunderstood by almost all groups. He remained a lonely sage and rendered selfless service not showing particular blind partisan attitude in any party, but worked for the welfare of the people in general. nation in particular and the world in general.

Another important reason for the failure to remember Shinde's achievement is the failure on the part of our scholars and historians to take up the work of assessment of the achievements of the leaders like Shinde. The historians have not yet turned their attention to writing the coherent history of the renaissance movement in India in general and Western India in particular. When such an effort will be undertaken, Shinde's activities will form an important chapter of this comprehensive history.

Well. after all, Shinde did not have an ambition of remaining immortal even in history. He was a saint in every sense of the term. The mission of his life was service to God through service to his fellow-beings without any distinction of caste, creed, language, nation or any other. He, in his spirit, belonged to the category of Universal Men. He will be long remembered after the din and dust of political and social conflicts have settled down.

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237	21	delete the words "personal hated them or disrespected them in his"	
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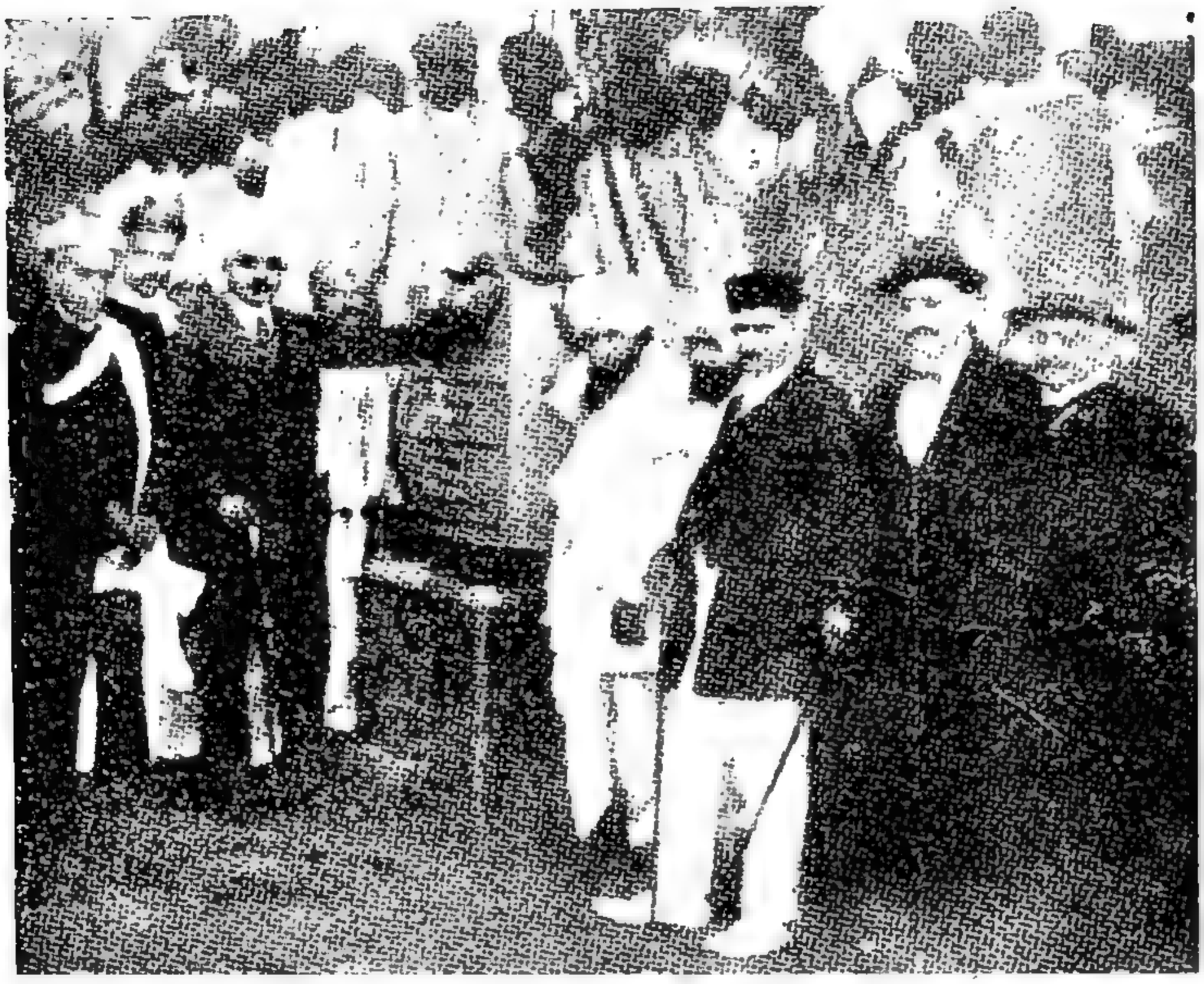
Karmaveer V R Shinde presiding over the Walva Taluqa Peasant Conference at Borgaon, Maharashtra (6-6-1931) A pen sketch by Shri Madhavrao Bagal

Parents of Karmaveer V. R. Shinde—Smt. Yamunabai and Shri Ramaji Shinde. The boy in the middle is Master Prataprao—the son of Karmaveer V. R. Shinde

Karmaveer V. R. Shinde's wife
Smt. Rukminibai

Karmaveer Shinde's sister
Smt. Janakka



A photo of foundation stone laying ceremony of Ahalyashram
L to R Dr Bhandarkar Yuvaraj Kantirao Narsimhraj Wadiyar
of Mysore Karmaveer V R Shinde Shri K G Patade, Shri
Shivaram Janba Kamble and Shri R P Parampe (5-9-1921)

Sir Narayan Ganesh
Chandavarkar

Dr Harold H. Mann,
Director of Agriculture,
Bombay Presidency

A building housing Brahmo Samaj at Wai, Maharashtra
(Founded on 4th July, 1933)

A scene depicting gathering at Walva Taluqa Peasant Conference at Borgaon, Maharashtra (6-6-1931). A bearded figure with garland in the centre of the photograph is Karmaveer V. R. Shinde. To his right could be seen Shri Govindrao Sasane and Shri Madhavrao Bagal

Maharaja of Baroda -
Sayajirao Gaikwad

Shri Khaserao Jadhav

Dr. Hemchandra Sarkar, a Missionary of
Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta

Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj
of Kolhapur

Shri Valchand Kothari

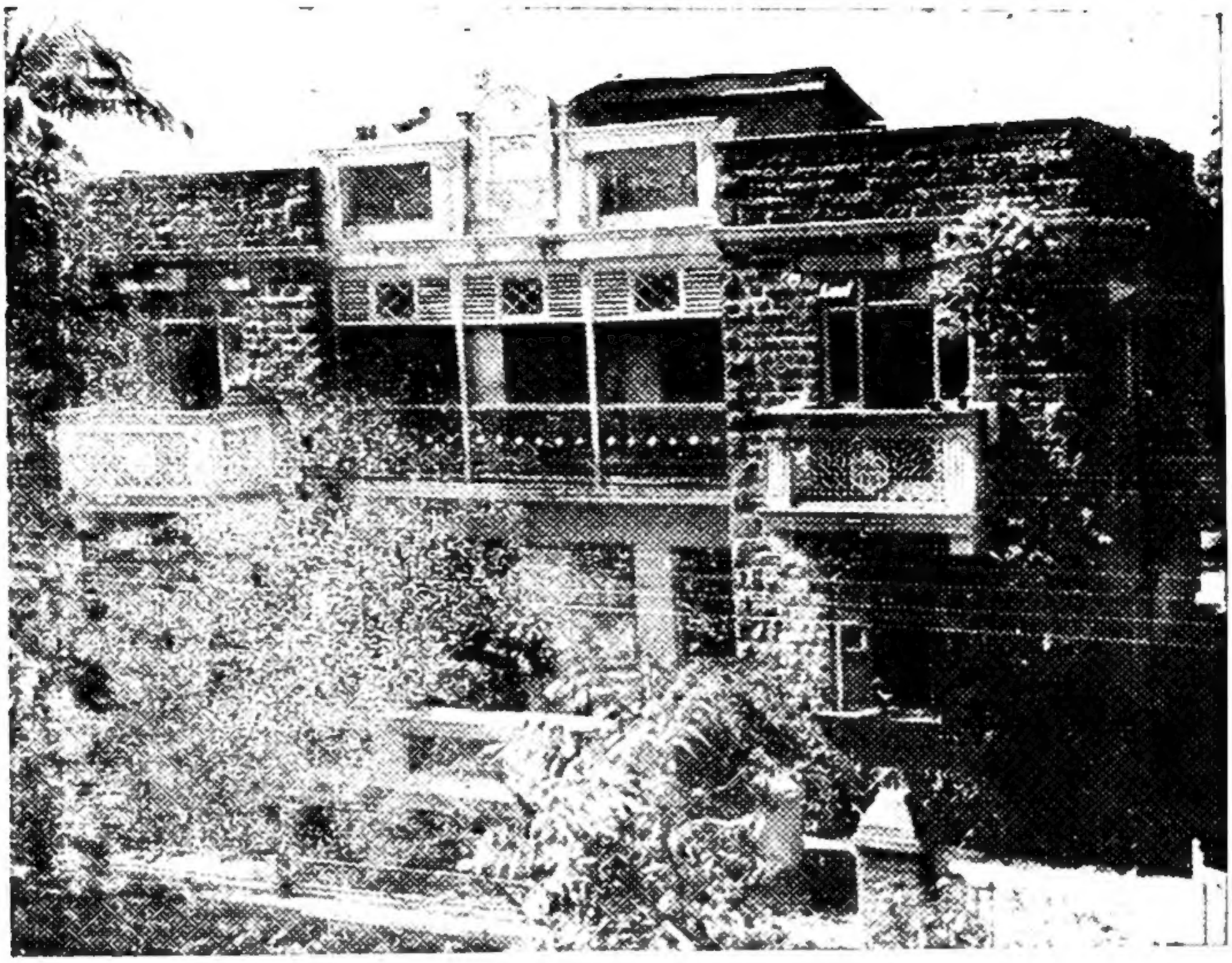
Shri Bhaskarrao Jadhav

Shri Baburao Jedhe

Shri Shripatrao Shinde

Shri Keshavrao Jedhe

Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil



Karmaveer V R Shinde's residence "Ram-Vihar" at Bhamburda, Poona

A bronze bust of Karmaveer V. R Shinde being presented by D. C. Mission Society of India Poona, to the Municipal Corporation of Poona on the occasion of Karmaveer's Centenary Celebration (23-4-1973)

SA
UBS